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EDITORIAL

IDEOLOGICAL BLINDERS

A recurrent criticism of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy is that when facts collide with ideology, the latter wins every time. Usually this critique comes from the port side of the boat, but recently the Reagan crew was skewered by its own people. In two reports on the Soviet economy requested by a Congressional committee, the Central Intelligence Agency refuted two articles of faith much revered around the White House. These are that the Soviet system is afflicted with economic rot from within and will soon topple, and that trade is a weapon that can be used to hasten its demise.

Au contraire, reports the C.I.A.'s National Intelligence Council. The Russian economy has been growing at a rather healthy rate of 4 to 5 percent annually for the past three decades. It is true that recently the growth rate has slowed to 1 or 2 percent, but Henry Rowen, chairman of the council, says, "We do not consider an economic 'collapse' . . . even a remote possibility."

As for the Administration's use of trade as an economic weapon (so long as doing so does not further alienate the farm vote), the second C.I.A. report concludes that the Soviet economy is virtually self-sufficient.

Two other studies—one by a Defense Department expert, the other by the conservative Heritage Foundation—agree that the Pentagon drastically underestimates the costs of all its new weapons systems. Thus, the $1.6 trillion Reagan plans to spend on defense through 1986 will balloon by the time the bills come due.

We could speculate on the impact of these studies on the Administration's thinking, but we already know the answer: the President will continue to listen to what he wants to hear. When it comes to facts about the Soviet system or defense spending, the White House is virtually self-sufficient.

ARTIFICIAL HEART
Barton J. Bernstein

A YANK AT XINHUA
Mark I. Pinsky

HEALTH INSURANCE TALES
Daniel Ben-Horin

ISRAEL'S DUAL ROOTS
Amos Kenan

'EXPLAINING AMERICA'
John H. Schaar

P.O. ART
Walter Kendrick

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

I WAS A COLD WAR PAWN

ALAN WOLFE

The cold war, about which I have been writing for more than ten years, was always an abstraction to me, an affair of distant states to be watched with clinical detachment. Lately, however, it has been calling me on the phone, coming to my house and inviting me out to lunch. In the past four years I have been contacted by both the K.G.B. and the F.B.I.—each, for reasons I cannot fathom, convinced that I am somehow worth paying attention to.

In the real cold war, I have argued in my writings, the Americans generally took the initiative, developing new weapons or escalating hostile rhetoric. But in my personal cold war, the Russians took the first step, inviting me to their country and then trying (and failing miserably) to keep open a channel of communication.

It all began one day when I was sitting in my office at Berkeley trying to coax a manuscript into sense. An exceptionally well-dressed man appeared at my door, so well-dressed that it didn't occur to me, until he began to talk, that he might be a Russian. His name, he said, was Dmitri (the names of all agents in this tale have been changed), and he was very interested in my writings. "Could we get together and chat at some future time?" he asked. "For no doubt a man like yourself is extremely busy." We set a date for two weeks later.

Dmitri, as I learned from his card, was an underling in the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco. When we met, he was prepared with a question based on something I had written. His real purpose, however, was not to discuss history but to ask if I would be interested in meeting a

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LETTERS.

CARICATURE OF IRVING HOWE

New York City

How ironic that two journals of opinion offered their readers personal diatribes against Irving Howe that masqueraded as reviews of his intellectual autobiography, *A Margin of Hope*. *Commentary*'s review, by Midge Decter, was predictable; *The Nation*'s, by Vivian Gornick ["A Life of the Mind," Jan. 1-8], was inexcusable.

Those of us who know and have worked with Howe in Democratic Socialists of America simply cannot recognize him in Gornick's caricature of a "closed, raging, polemical" personality. Rather, Howe is a thoughtful and reasonable man, an individual whose life's work, exemplified by his founding of *Dissent* in 1954, has been in the service of a democratic radicalism.

It is true that Howe and other critics, including this writer ["Life of the Party," *The Nation*, Jan. 28, 1978], have criticized Gornick for her romantic view of America's Communists and for her lack of consideration of their politics. Her review indicates that she has learned little from such criticism.

Gornick gives herself away when she writes that Howe and "the Stalinists sound exactly alike" because "the *way* all these people speak is more important than what they have to say." Indeed! Is constant apologia for mass murder no different from a reasoned argument on the necessity of democratic socialism? Howe's strength has been to reject authoritarianism from whatever quarter it emanates—whether from Stalinists on the "left" or from neoconservatives on the New Right. If Gornick would listen to what people say, rather than note only the passion with which they say it, perhaps she would get the point.

Gornick sees Howe's anti-Stalinism as "an amazement," and she charges that his opposition to Stalinism "is so disproportionate as to be psychologically suspect." What is amazing is that one who supposedly welcomes the creation of a socialist movement in America can be so little concerned with it; it was the perpetual defense of Stalinism by "progressives" like Gornick that helped destroy the chances of an emerging, genuine socialist movement.

Ronald Radosh

THE COSTA RICAN FRONT

Washington, D.C.

Stephen Schlesinger's "Reagan's 'Secret' War on Nicaragua" [*The Nation*, Jan. 1-8] provides a good restatement and amplification of previous accounts of U.S. aggression, covert and otherwise, against Nicaragua. In his conclusion, Schlesinger predicts more of the same strategy, and speculates that Honduras will be the launching pad for a Somocista "winter offensive."

Signs abound, however, that suggest a startling new twist, unmentioned by Schlesinger. While some sort of offensive appears imminent, many insiders have reported to the Council on Hemispheric Affairs that the staging area may have expanded recently from Honduras to include a most unlikely venue—Costa Rica. There are a number of compelling reasons to believe that this country may be used as the embarkation point for a major drive to oust the Sandinists. Costa Rica's new President, Luis Alberto Monge, has become the Reagan Administration's stridently anti-Communist Central American surrogate, and has swapped Costa Rica's traditionally independent foreign policy for the promise of massive U.S. assistance to shore up its sagging economy.

The centerpiece of the plan to open a front in Costa Rica is based on a supposed C.I.A.-engineered agreement with ex-Sandinist Eden Pastora. This former revolutionary, who previously would have nothing to do with the Somocistas or the C.I.A., has recently created an antigovernment military force called the Sandino Revolutionary Front and apparently has agreed to lead an exile army against his former allies, provided that the exile force is cleansed of high-ranking members of Somoza's National Guard, particularly its commander, Enrique Bermudez. U.S. diplomatic officials are whispering that Pastora, who lives in Costa Rica, is already setting up shop along the San Juan River, Costa Rica's boundary with Nicaragua, where exile bands already exist.

How far the Costa Ricans will allow themselves to be drawn into the quagmire is of course impossible to predict. What we do know is that San José no longer vigorously monitors the border region, thus giving free rein to the growing number of armed Nicaraguans stationed in the area. If this scenario is accurate, the Reagan Administration's insistence on a military solution in Central America will only serve to bring closer the hideous possibility of a widespread regional war—Costa Rica included.

Kenneth W. Ellingwood
William E. Scheer
Research Associates
Council on Hemispheric Affairs

ANTI-RUSSIAN VENOM

Baltimore

As a longtime subscriber, I have been baffled by the sudden disappearance of any claim to objectivity in *The Nation*'s coverage of socialist countries.

Who in the world wrote the editorial "Soviet Disraeli" in the November 20 issue? And *The Nation* can certainly do better, if its interest is enlightenment, than the Soviet demonologist Stephen Cohen.

How is it that *The Nation* can produce so many fine articles exploring the underworld of the American military-industrial complex, and yet go bananas in examining countries on the socialist path? I have the impression that either this is a cleansing process to establish liberal credentials or the magazine's paranoia is similar to that of those it attacks on the right.

The arrant nonsense of anti-Soviet editorials and "Sovieticus" undermine all *The Nation*'s alleged devotion to peace. Surely, there must be something nice to say about the Soviet no-first-strike pledge, its ratification of SALT II, its sponsorship of no less than 130 peace proposals at the United Nations, its acceptance of the freeze, a comprehensive test ban and so on. Even a close examination of Soviet domestic policies would be healthy for readers.

If the magazine's editors are fearful of a position that actually sheds light on the Soviet Union, perhaps they can run an occasional column clearly labeled as not necessarily expressing their views. The point is that the intense venom directed against the Soviet Union by the NATO governments is directly related to preparations for war, nuclear war at that. World War II had its origins in the same ideological preparations. One cannot really struggle for peace without penetrating the paper curtain erected around the Soviet Union since October 1917.

Harold Buchman

GO ASK ALICE

Trenton, N.J.

I have heard from sources close to Norman Podhoretz, Adm. Stansfield Turner and Clifford Irving that Wieslaw Gornicki ["The Litvak Papers," *The Nation*, Dec. 4], noted Polish disinformation specialist, does not exist.

I also discovered in John Dean's new book, *Lost Honor*, that William Safire, whom Gornicki cites as an expert on anti-Communist disinformation tactics, doesn't exist either.

I never did believe in Jerzy Kosinski.

Instead of chasing red herrings, why doesn't *The Nation* get down to the serious business of exposing Gore Vidal, whose books are written by a displaced Oxford don named Julian A. Postate, who defected to Riga during the cold war; or to unmasking the mysterious Alice who is jerking Calvin Trillin's strings?

Yrs. for closing the disinformation gap,

Tom Blackburn

TRILLIN REPLIES

New York City

I resent Tom Blackburn's implication that what appears in *The Nation* under my name is in any way controlled by my wife, Alice: She writes only my food books; the *Nation* columns are written by my daughters.

Calvin Trillin

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EDITORIALS.

Certifying Evil

It is terrifying to imagine how much savagery and repression would be enough to offend the Reagan Administration when it surveys the human rights records of its client countries in Central America. In Guatemala and El Salvador, at least, too much ain't enough. On January 7, the White House lifted an arms embargo in effect since 1978, thus allowing the Guatemalan regime of Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt to purchase $6.3 million worth of air force equipment. And President Reagan will shortly inform Congress that the government of Roberto d'Aubuisson is fit to receive about $125 million in direct U.S. military aid. The State Department claims that both countries show marked improvement in their previously problematic human rights behavior. But such claims are fantastic. Consider the reality:

In Guatemala, the army is pursuing a brutal policy of terror against Indian villagers in several provinces. In a typical incident, during the last week of November, the villages of Montecristo and Bullaj were bombed, eighty-five houses were destroyed and 500 soldiers from the feared Special Forces (called *kaibiles*) massacred at least thirty-six people. After such raids, surviving male villagers are pressed into military service, given crude weapons and

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sent out on doomed patrols against the guerrillas.

Reporters in Guatemala say that the Ríos Montt government has passed easily from mere authoritarianism into downright totalitarianism (to use Jeane Kirkpatrick's whimsical categories). Where former military regimes conducted haphazard wars of attrition against the insurgent forces, the policy now is blitzkrieg and extermination. If there is an atmosphere of peace and calm in once volatile areas, the reporters say, it is the peace of the captive and the calm of the dead.

In El Salvador, the d'Aubuisson government has repealed the moderate land-reform decree of the administration it replaced in last year's elections. Moreover, since March some 7,000 peasant beneficiaries of land reform have been forcibly evicted by their former landlords. Thirteen mayors and local officials of the opposition Christian Democratic Party have been killed since those elections. Twenty-six members of ANDES, the national teachers union, were abducted on August 20 and later tortured and imprisoned. Eight labor leaders and six members of the revolutionary opposition "disappeared" in mid-October; only five have been accounted for. One suspect in the assassinations of a land-reform official and two American advisers seems to have escaped from police custody; the other suspect was freed for "insufficient evidence." The Maryknoll sisters have announced they will not cooperate in the trial of five low-level soldiers charged with killing four American churchwomen in 1980; the sisters say they cannot find independent lawyers, and the whole process is a sham. And d'Aubuisson has rejected an October 26 proposal by the guerrillas to negotiate a political solution to the conflict without preconditions.

According to the 1981 act of Congress requiring Presidential certification of human rights progress in El Salvador as a prerequisite for military aid, several findings must be made. For example, the President must show that the government of El Salvador is "making continued progress in implementing essential economic and political reforms," that it is making "good faith efforts to begin discussions with all major factions . . . which have declared their willingness to find . . . an equitable political solution," that it is bringing "an end to the indiscriminate torture and murder of Salvadoran civilians," and that it is making "a concerted and significant effort to comply with internationally recognized human rights." Congress has asked separately that progress be made in the investigation of the murders of American civilians.

It will take an extraordinarily obtuse and perverse President to make such findings in the face of the aforementioned facts, but we have a man in the White House who believes in staying the course with friendly tyrants. Consequently, it is important that the facts the President will ignore be kept before the public. To this end, a demonstration and nonviolent blockade of the State Department will be held on Monday, January 24, by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). And there's always next time: certification comes up again in 180 days.

Truth as Fiction

Missing—Costa-Gavras's widely praised film about the disappearance and death of Charles Horman, a young leftish American journalist in Chile during the 1973 coup—is now the subject of a major motion picture libel suit. The movie suggests that American officials in Chile—the ambassador, the consul and a military aide—were implicated in the Horman affair. Now the real-life Ambassador, Nathaniel Davis, as well as Consul Frederick D. Purdy and Capt. Ray E. Davis, are suing the filmmakers, the author of the book on which the movie was based and the publishers for $60 million. The three Americans—whose real names were not used in the film—say they were "held up to public disgrace, scorn and ridicule" and lost their good names.

From the beginning, *Missing* became a battleground in the cultural war still raging between those who insistently question the honesty and integrity of American officialdom at home and abroad and those who are predisposed to defend the expressions of American authority. The defenders of American faith found their favorite weapons in the arsenal of legalism: they charged that Costa-Gavras failed to fulfill evidentiary requirements by finding a smoking gun in the Americans' hands. We discussed the cultural campaign against *Missing* last April, and quoted *New York Times* correspondent Flora Lewis's attack on Costa-Gavras:

> His reasoning is wide-ranging, deductive from a general sense of American policy and methods, based on sentiment instead of specifics. . . . The line between fact and fancy is the line of passion. . . . The definition of truth has always been difficult, but he doesn't concede the distortion of art. In that way, he winds up distorting fact without even noticing.

Costa-Gavras takes Lewis's condemnation as a compliment. The involvement of American government and corporate interests in Chile during the Allende years is incontrovertible, but perhaps the texture of truth in the Chilean tangle was best displayed as fiction, created by artists with an eye and an ear for authenticity rather than an obsession with evidence.

Now the officials have entered the courts, where they are most comfortable, hoping to use the law to punish those who sought to make bigger truths out of little facts. And, in the process, they would frighten those who would try to tell other true stories in their own way in the future.

Miami Reprise

Miami

Miami's most recent civil disturbance, like its bloodier predecessor in 1980, has elicited an outpouring of official concern over the plight of the city's blacks. Miami City Manager Howard Gary, a black, proposed a community board to monitor the police. Mayor Maurice Ferre called for a blue-ribbon panel to investigate the police shooting that triggered the disturbance,

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and he also spoke of forming an agency to attack inner-city blight. The Mayor, born into a wealthy Puerto Rican family, has admitted that he and other public officials here bear some guilt for not making black interests a higher priority. "The first step toward salvation," the Mayor said, "is admission of guilt. It's time to say we made a mistake."

To some of Miami's more skeptical blacks, however, the establishment's response to the disturbance was symptomatic of the mentality that helped breed the violence in the first place. Most official reaction immediately after the December 28 eruption in Miami's Overtown slum included a reference to the damage that bad publicity would do to the city's reputation, which civic leaders had hoped was on the mend as a result of Federal and local efforts to combat crime and drug smuggling.

What made the outbreak especially troubling to South Florida officials and boosters was that it occurred just three days before the annual Orange Bowl festivities, Miami's tourist and publicity extravaganza. Whether or not bad press and lost bucks were the officials' main concern, it is interesting to note that even in urging a communal admission of guilt, Mayor Ferre felt compelled to stress the economic loss the entire region would suffer if the slums were neglected and more riots occurred: "Let's say that we are not concerned with humanitarian aspects. Let's be crass and say we are being materialistic. How much has it cost for the headlines we have been getting?"

How much of a role slum conditions played in causing the disturbance is open to question. Marvin Dunn, a black psychologist in Miami who has become something of an authority on local riots, says it is a mistake to attribute every disorder to "all the bad things that happen to black people." Blacks suffer constant economic pain, but riots in black ghettos historically have been triggered by perceived injustices in particular conflicts between citizens and police.

Still, one can't comprehend last month's explosion without understanding what made Overtown a tinderbox: the lack of jobs, the dilapidated housing, the pervasive belief in the unfairness of the criminal justice system. And what makes things worse for blacks today is the clear message they have received from politicians that their interests don't top the agenda, locally or nationally. This is as true of Ed Koch's New York as of Maurice Ferre's Miami, not to mention Ronald Reagan's America. It may be, as a writer for *The Economist* noted in a recent article that prompted the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce to cancel a luncheon for him, that the blacks' "plight is particularly acute in Miami." But it is also true that 1982 was not a particularly good time to be black anywhere in this country.

The past year in Miami was replete with examples of the subordination of black interests to other considerations as diverse as the Orange Bowl and a lily-white interpretation of the constitutional guarantee of equal protection. Regarding the latter, just twelve days before the Overtown disturbance, U.S. District Judge James Kehoe ruled unconstitutional a Dade County "race consciousness" ordinance under which the county sought to give a black contractor the job of building a Metrorail station in a black neighborhood. The rapid-transit project was narrowly approved in a bond referendum, and black support played a decisive role. Blacks were assured of the same economic benefits that Atlanta blacks have gained from the construction of that city's transit line. But by last July, with sixteen of twenty Metrorail station contracts signed, there was not a single black prime contractor. The County Commission consequently passed its race-consciousness law, which permits the commission to set aside contracts for black firms.

In his ruling, Kehoe held that allowing an entire contract to be bid on a blacks-only basis "went further than necessary and resulted in an unlawful preference for one racial group over another." If upheld on appeal, the ruling makes it likely that no black prime contractor will build a Metrorail station. The immediate beneficiary of the judge's decision was the Associated General Contractors of South Florida, which brought the suit. None of the group's members, its director testified in court, are black.

Another concern that plainly outranked the interests of blacks in 1982 was fighting crime. Miami's major business leaders, such as Eastern Airlines chairman Frank Borman and Knight-Ridder Newspapers chairman Alvah Chapman, threw their weight behind an organization called Miami Citizens Against Crime, which helped convince President Reagan to establish a task force on South Florida's crime and drug problem. The group also lobbied local governments to increase their police forces and helped persuade a reluctant Florida Legislature to raise the sales tax from 4 percent to 5 percent, mainly to finance anticrime activities.

An Urban League study in July challenged the thinking behind the anticrime fight. The campaign, the study said, was destined to fail because it ignored the fact that the distribution of wealth is "a basic contributor to the existing rate of crime." Bill Colson, a prominent Miami lawyer and leader of the anticrime group, responded that unemployment, housing and other underlying causes of crime are important, but not the highest priority. Colson said that Citizens Against Crime had considered including those issues on its agenda but had rejected that approach. "The first priority," he added, "has to be getting control of our streets."

In 1969, a year after the Kerner Commission report on the causes of civil disorders, the National Urban Coalition sponsored a follow-up study. It found that people were sick of reading news stories about urban ghettos. "Millions of white Americans," the report said, "were tired of hearing about these conditions." The subject is no more attractive today for many Americans. So Miami is not unique in its propensity to give other matters precedence over the problems of poor blacks. The recent disorder in Miami's streets reminds the nation as well as the city of the costs of this neglect. ERIC RIEDER

Eric Rieder writes about legal affairs for The Miami Herald.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

It was once said of, I think, Herbert Hoover that he was a hard man to bamboozle but, once bamboozled, a *very* hard man to unbamboozle. This reflection flashed across my weary mind when I saw a photograph of Ronald Reagan, on his election night, gripping a copy of *News World*. It was not, I thought, a very good beginning to a Presidency. But then, perhaps the old fool didn't know that he was clutching a Moonie paper. Or perhaps some artful young acolyte had caught him unawares and seized the opportunity to please "Master" with a propaganda coup. Anyway, the episode was soon forgotten and rapidly succeeded by a dazzling succession of Presidential blunders and reversals. I put Moon on my back burner and, apart from the odd swipe at his execrable new paper, *The Washington Times*, left him rather out of the reckoning.

For which I duly apologize. Moon and his subordinates are, more and more obviously, becoming a serious Washington pollutant. With their money and their army of empty-eyed young activists they have been able to catch and hold the attention of a wide swath of the New Right. Specifically, the Moonies have succeeded in:

§ Attracting favorable comments and endorsements from Senator John East, from Terry Dolan of the National Conservative Political Action Committee, from Jerry Falwell and from other leading reactionaries.

§ Cooperating in making and distributing a propaganda film (oddly enough about infiltration and subversion) with Senators Jesse Helms and John East.

§ Putting up $20 million in seed money for *The Washington Times*, which has become the leading outlet in the capital for right-wing propagandists, from Patrick Buchanan to Phyllis Schlafly. John Lofton Jr., the guru of *Conservative Digest*, is a staffer, and William Rusher, the publisher of *National Review*, is on the board. What could be more ecumenical? Moon also publishes a Washington monthly called *The Rising Tide*, in which such ornaments of the right as Reed Irvine, chairman of Accuracy In Media, have a regular platform. Most of those named above have also been present as guests at subsidized Moonie conferences in the tight little republic of South Korea.

§ Becoming the chief investor in a Washington bank, the Diplomat National, in which another principal shareholder was the Richard A. Viguerie Company. An S.E.C. investigation resulted in the Moonies "disinvesting" from this concern, but Viguerie's direct mail company later landed the $700,000 subscription contract for *The Washington Times*.

Does any of this matter? Yes, unless you believe Moon to be a harmless eccentric. There is something rather horrible in the way he continues to expand, like some growth, over the American political scene. Despite indictments and a conviction for all kinds of tax fiddling, despite his known connections with the subversive activities of a foreign power, despite a record of kidnapping and coercion and despite his openly fascistic opinions and practices, this hateful person has a whole clutch of eminent Reaganites eating almost literally from his hand. And when he had a little visa problem, Strom Thurmond was available to sort it out for him.

The Ripon Society, a liberal Republican group chaired by Representative Jim Leach of Iowa, has prepared a report on Moonie penetration of the party, my debt to which I gratefully acknowledge. They have written to Senator Paul Laxalt, the new Republican national chairman, with hard evidence of the cash and political clout that Moon is wielding. (When I called the Republican National Committee I got a "no comment" with a strong overtone of hostility to it.) As Republicans, of course, the Ripon people find it offensive that supposedly profamily and pro-Christian activists can be duped by an outfit that breaks up families and preaches the blasphemous bullshit that proclaims Moon as the Messiah. As they point out, no leading New Right figure has ever criticized Moon. That's a serious and sincere tribute to the power of money—which is the only thing that born-again conservatives really worship.

To give one example of how Moon rewards friendship, there is the sweet story of a Richard Viguerie direct mail campaign. In 1975, the Korean Cultural and Freedom Foundation, a Moonie front organization, sent out a mailing for the "Childrens Relief Fund." The appeal said, "Thousands of little boys and girls are suffering from the terminal forms of malnutrition . . . what better could you give than a gift to fight suffering and death?" The public responded with $1,508,256. The auditors in New York State were elated to find that $920,000, or more than 60 percent of the total, had been absorbed by Viguerie's firm. Other Moonie leaders split most of the rest, leaving just 6.3 percent for the wretched children, if any. One of the beneficiaries of the scheme, lucid in its simplicity, was Moon's sidekick Bo Hi Pak. A former Washington officer of the Korean C.I.A., who made a spectacle of himself at Representative Donald Fraser's "Koreagate" hearings in 1977, Pak is now involved on the business side of—*The Washington Times*.

What is depressing is not just the scandal of Moon's activity, but the apparent impunity with which it is conducted. The New Right is perfectly consistent in selling out, despite its proclaimed piety, to a purveyor of moral chaos. But that doesn't mean that the rest of our political culture should tolerate it. Resolution and suggestion for the new year: Keep up the fire on the Moon.

Final word on the Vietnam memorial. If you ask for the official statement on the last American serviceman to be killed in Vietnam, and then go and look at the memorial, you are in for a tasteful surprise. The monument lists the casualties of the war in the order in which they occurred. But the name of the last casualty in the war is eighteen lines from the end. What's the explanation? The final batch of names consists of the men killed in the Mayaguez raid. Those men died after the war was over, after the evacuation of Indochina, in a futile attack on Cambodia which was mounted in order to appease the threatened vanity of Gerald Ford. This is what is known in the mushy new parlance as their "coming home."

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ARTICLES.

THE ARTIFICIAL HEART

Is it a Boon or a High-Tech Fix?

BARTON J. BERNSTEIN

On December 2, amid much journalistic fanfare, surgeons in Salt Lake City implanted an artificial heart in Barney Clark, a retired dentist suffering from irreversible heart damage and hovering near death. This was the third implant of an artificial heart in a human being and the first designed to be permanent. The operation has been heralded as the triumph of "heroic" medicine: skilled surgeons mobilizing high technology to extend, and possibly improve, human life.

The bloom of early enthusiasm wilted when Clark underwent two more operations—the first to stop air bubbles from forming in his lungs and the second to replace a broken part of the mechanical heart. A malfunction in the artificial heart that showed up during the original operation compelled surgeons to replace the left ventricle. Such problems remind us that the device is still experimental, and to describe it as "permanent" is a statement of hope, not reality. Also, it has no implantable power source, and therefore the recipient must be tethered by six-foot lines to a 350-pound console. Above all, important questions remain about the desirability of an artificial heart, the general emphasis on high technology in medicine and the current infatuation with heroic remedies.

So far, however, there has been almost no public discussion of the issues involved. Congress has not adequately examined the Federally funded artificial-heart program since its inception eighteen years ago. There was little public debate at the time, and one key Federal official concealed his objections from Congress and the public. The press, for the most part, publicized the optimistic—even unrealistic—claims and ignored the early failures and setbacks.

Foremost among these issues is the matter of cost. Can America afford to develop a workable artificial heart? It has been estimated that the device, the operation and the hospital care would cost $100,000 per recipient in the first year after implantation. With projections of the number of recipients ranging from 16,000 to 66,000 each year, the total annual cost would run between $1.6 billion and $6.6 billion. At a time when the Federal budget is strained, when the deficit is approaching $200 billion and when many Federal health programs are being cut back, the nation cannot afford these additional expenditures.

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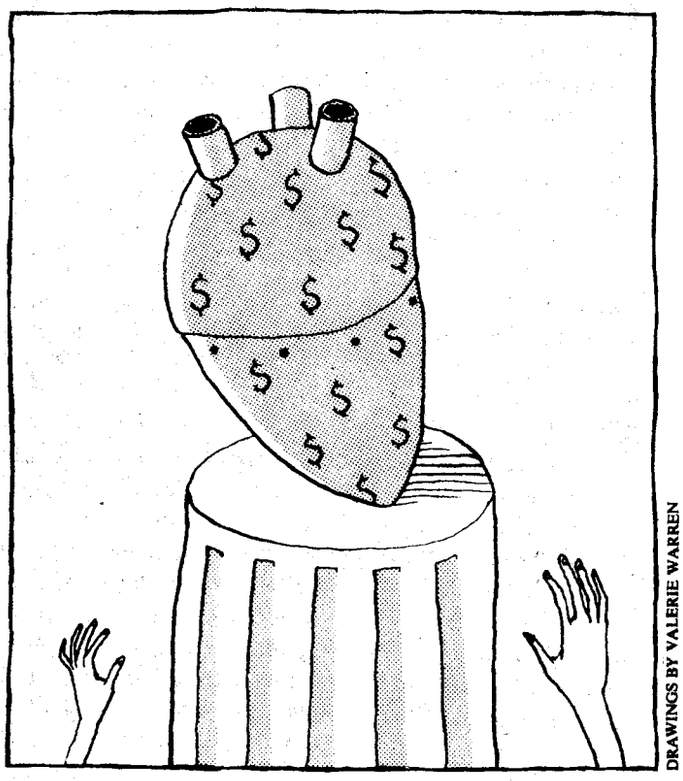
Yet if the artificial heart is perfected and the government is unwilling to pay for the operations of all who need it, the device will be available only to the wealthy, who already receive better health care than the poor do. Whether a patient lives or dies would be based solely on his or her ability to pay—a situation which would pain many Americans and offend their sense of justice. It was the desire to avoid this unfairness that impelled the Federal government to fund all kidney dialysis treatments in the United States. In the case of the artificial heart, condemning to death those who cannot pay would be even more morally troubling, because only the wealthy would benefit from the $200 million Federally funded program that developed the device.

Federal funding of a massive artificial-heart program, with annual expenditures in the billions, would mean the continuing neglect of research on the prevention of heart disease, which would benefit more Americans. The government should provide more funding for research in other areas of preventive medicine—prenatal care and nutrition, for example.

Furthermore, there are serious doubts that the artificial heart will make the lives of heart patients significantly better if it should become widely available. Being tethered to air hoses may not be much better than being bedridden. The experience of dialysis patients is relevant here. They have a suicide rate that is eight times that of the general population; many of them are depressed and unable to work. And the promise of a power system that can be implanted remains just that—a promise. So far, the artificial-heart program has been riddled with unrealistic promises—about the scientific knowledge that will be gained and about the improved quality of life. Estimates of the cost



DRAWINGS BY VALERIE WARREN

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of the program and when it will reach its goal have consistently been overly optimistic.

Conceived in the early 1960s amid widespread euphoria, and promoted by leading heart surgeons and biotechnicians, the Federal program was supposed to cost $40 million and develop a *fully* implantable heart within five years. The first implant was to take place on February 14, 1970—Valentine's Day. Now, the program is more than a decade behind schedule and the total cost has soared 500 percent. Even the most optimistic proponents do not think there will be a fully implantable device until the end of the 1980s, at the earliest, and some experts close to the program think that goal will not be achieved for at least a generation.

When it first considered funding the program, Congress never heard from some highly placed government experts who opposed it. Dr. James Shannon, a cardiologist and the director of the National Institutes of Health, was one who privately resisted the program but publicly supported it. He deemed the program premature, correctly argued that the basic scientific problems (including the need for a safe, reliable, implantable power source) could not soon be solved and feared that massive funding for the artificial heart would distort research priorities. Wishing to avoid a public squabble with the program's powerful advocates, he did not convey his misgivings to the Congressional committee considering appropriations. Instead, he secured additional funding for other heart-research programs by telling gullible Congressmen that the artificial heart could be developed for even less money than Congress planned to appropriate.

In the upbeat mood of the early days, the medical experts also made unrealistic assessments of the risks and benefits of artificial hearts. They predicted that no one would die on the operating table, that no device would fail and that most patients would be able to resume working full time, adding $19 billion to the gross national product within a decade. The optimists disregarded the findings on dialysis patients and evaded fundamental questions about the wisdom of pursuing high-technology fixes for medical problems.

The artificial-heart program has been subjected to only perfunctory Congressional oversight. Budget requests are routinely approved after hearings lasting two hours on the average. Because the annual expenditures to develop the device have been relatively small (about $8 million to $10 million), and because most members of Congress have an almost blind faith in physicians and medical experts, there has been no inclination to challenge the program, to raise doubts about its future costs or to ask whether an artificial heart is even desirable.

With the artificial heart still in an experimental stage and a totally implantable device at least a decade away, now is the time for a probing public dialogue about the costs—economic and social—of developing this device. Admittedly, there is little glamour in preventive medicine. Sometimes its findings require us to reconsider the structure of our society and the injuries we quietly suffer in the name of economic necessity. That is why heroic medicine has often seemed more attractive. It does not prompt demands for social reform or for the elimination of hazards in the workplace, and it represents a triumph of skilled physicians and technology over illness and nature. But such triumphs can be costly and shortsighted.

The quest for the artificial heart should remind us that technology shapes our world, and our expectations and fears, in both dramatic and subtle ways. It should provoke us to ponder once more the larger questions: Who makes decisions about technological developments, especially when they are Federally funded? How should those decisions be made? Do the experts always know what is best? Or should the people also have a voice in the matter? □

A YANK AT XINHUA

Reporting in China—First, The Good News

MARK I. PINSKY

Beijing

Confined by convenience and the Foreign Ministry to the diplomatic quarter of Beijing—a city that to Americans combines the ambiance of Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C.—foreign reporters in the capital of the People's Republic tend to stew or overheat, like dumplings in a bamboo steamer. The glory days of Edgar Snow, Agnes Smedley, Jack Belden and Teddy White are past. Now there is mainly the gritty reality of a complex, postrevolutionary society to report, which may account for the sullen mood these days of many Western correspondents.

The perspective from Xinhua (New China) News Agency, where I have been working as a "foreign expert" for more than six months, is a bit different. While some of the 4,000 comrades here are resigned and cynical, even bitter—as well they might be, living in the capital of a disastrously overcrowded country that is 80 percent peasant, both in population and leadership—they are muddling through.

Many Xinhua employees live across the street from the ten-story building where they work, in blocks of small Spartan flats owned by the agency, for which they are charged only nominal rent. They shower at a facility next door to the office, lunch in the adjoining canteen, watch new movies on their midday break, send their children to agency-run day-care centers or nurseries, play volleyball and basketball on company courts out back, or badminton and Ping-Pong in the corridors.

There are problems, which no one avoids mentioning. Like

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most work units in China, Xinhua is considerably overstaffed, and the employees—by general, if not unanimous, opinion—are underpaid, averaging 50 yuan ($30) a month. The VDTs are not yet equipped with memory functions and, as is common in this country, the teletype operators who set English, French and Spanish copy speak only Chinese.

In their professional roles as reporters, translators and editors, the most realistic aspiration of the newsmen and newswomen of Xinhua is to practice "developmental journalism," a vague concept which these days means putting the best face possible on domestic news and engaging in moderated "cheerleading" in international reporting, both at a level of technical competence that measures up to Western standards. The pace is slower than I remember it being at the Associated Press, where I was once employed, but the work gets done every day.

There is, to be sure, some malaise, and the pervasive attitude among the work force at Xinhua, as elsewhere in China, has been described by one local observer as "I'm all right, Comrade Jack." Among the leadership and much of the bureaucracy—at least where any initiative in decision-making is concerned—the dominant theories of management are what is known in the Army and many American corporations as "C.Y.A." (Cover Your Ass) and "make inertia work for you." There is an overwhelming temptation to describe the machinery of the agency, like that of the government and the Communist Party, as Byzantine, forgetting that Chinese bureaucracy predates the Byzantine Empire. The hardest question for a foreigner, new on the job, to get answered is: "Who's in charge here?"

Late last summer the National People's Congress ratified the shift of Xinhua from under the direct control of the propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party to ministerial status under the State Council, designating the agency "the state organ for unified releasing of important news."

According to a story by the Associated Press, the reason for this shift is that China "is actively trying to separate party and government functions, keep the party from meddling and insure accurate news reporting." As if to underscore the point, the same week that the transfer was announced, Communist Party Chairman Hu Yaobang gave an exclusive, extended interview to Henri Pigeat, chairman of Agence France Presse—something he has yet to do for Xinhua.

Along with a new bureaucratic niche, the agency also got a new director general, Mu Qing, who, at 61, is considered a youngster by Chinese leadership standards. The new chief, who comes from a poor Moslem family of seven children, dropped out of high school to join the Red Army. First in Yenan, and later in Hunan Province and northeastern China, he alternated slogan and leaflet writing with guerrilla fighting and combat reporting. After seventeen years with Xinhua, including a period during the Cultural Revolution when he worked as a dishwasher and bricklayer, he was promoted to deputy director general of the agency. After being elevated to the top post, he was made a member of the Central Committee.

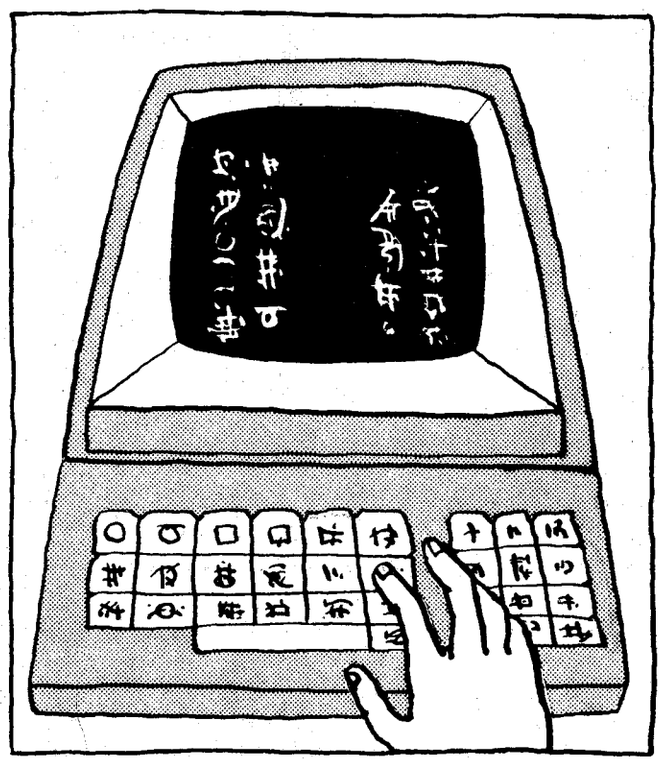
Before his promotion, Mu Qing outlined some of his thoughts on journalism and Western influences on the profession in China in an interview published in the Hong Kong magazine *Media*. The interviewer was Bill Cranfield, a former Xinhua foreign expert from Britain. At times, the director general seems very much the ideological hard-liner:

> There is no such thing as a free press anywhere in the world. All journalism serves the interests of a particular class. But apart from during our dark age, under the Gang of Four, I have never felt that I wasn't free to report anything I wanted to. . . . As a government agency, our biggest task is to serve the revolutionary cause of our country and our people and to promote the prosperity and progress of the motherland.

On nuts-and-bolts issues, however, Mu Qing evinces a more subtle understanding of the problems of reporting in the Third World. Domestic staffers and foreign experts alike have long complained about Xinhua's laggard coverage of train wrecks, plane crashes, floods and earthquakes. Mu Qing told Cranfield:

> Such things as natural disasters should be reported, but we shouldn't over-emphasize them to the exclusion of other news, so that people become dispirited and lose their ability to see the whole picture. The media are very influential and cannot therefore afford to be one-sided. It's not really a question of *whether* to report or not, but of *how* to report. We must take a positive attitude toward bad news and not give the impression of helplessness in the face of calamities.

At times, working as a "polisher" (i.e., doing light editing) in the Home News for International Transmission section, I've discussed with my American colleagues—some of whom have been at Xinhua for more than thirty years—what it is that the agency hopes to learn from the



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West about journalism. Fortunately, Cranfield asked Mu Qing the same question, and was told:

> . . . how to organize and present material with the right balance of background and news angles, how to write more entertainingly, how to be briefer. . . . But we must not copy mechanically, as a formula. . . . Western newsmen stress timeliness; today's news must be written and read today. But in China, a lot of our news happens over a long period of time. Our requirements are therefore sometimes different, and not all foreign techniques are always suitable. . . . I have been telling our journalists that they must not copy the Western attitude to their profession, where it is sometimes said that journalists are kings without crowns. But neither must they be mere bystanders.

There is still much the journalists at Xinhua can learn from the West. In conformity to Chinese literary style, leads to news stories are still routinely buried in the next to last paragraph; there is too much vagueness and imprecision where sources and figures are concerned.

But there is a willingness now to accept and implement advice from temporarily resident barbarians. Errors or exaggerations in wire service copy are criticized in letters to the editor of *China Daily*, the English language paper in Beijing. Recently, one such letter led to the formation of an "inspection team" at Xinhua, which traveled to a provincial bureau to determine exactly what had gone wrong in the system and why. Its findings, dissecting the errant story and offering suggestions on how to avoid such foul-ups, subsequently appeared in Xinhua's in-house magazine. And, statements by the chief to the contrary notwithstanding, journalism does not always and automatically defer to ideology at the agency. Suggestions—properly put—get results. Not long ago I noted that a story I had polished, which suggested that workers throughout China had been producing at record individual levels in anticipation of the convocation of the 12th Congress of the Communist Party, was "not credible as written." The story never appeared on the wire. □

BEWARE OF SHARKS

Tales of a Health Insurance Groupie

DANIEL BEN-HORIN

When I showed an early draft of this article to a friend, he said, "It's a very funny story and it makes you look like a total idiot."

I tried to reshape the material so that I would appear in a more heroic light, but the plot has some inherent limitations. It is difficult to derive much glory from having guided Media Alliance, an association of 2,000 journalists, through two defaulting health insurance plans within a fifteen-month span.

To begin close to the end, I returned from a spectacularly unsuccessful four-day fishing trip last September to be greeted with a certain reticence by my ordinarily convivial mate. After chatting in a desultory manner for an hour or so—there is only so much mileage one can get out of a single 5-inch rainbow trout—the reason for her subdued welcome emerged. "Chris called," she said. "He said to tell you that the insurance company was placed in receivership yesterday in L.A."

The message meant that 300 members of Media Alliance, along with 70,000 other Californians (including approximately 10,000 insured through arts-related associations similar to M.A.), were now without health insurance. Moreover, all who had filed claims faced the likely prospect of never collecting a penny on their medical bills. The Los Angeles Superior Court had decided that American Benefits Limited (A.B.L.), our health insurance company, could not manage its own affairs because it was $10 million in the red. Also it was operating without the reinsurance contract mandated by state law.

Media Alliance's members, who range from established writers like Jessica Mitford to a fair number of "I moved to San Francisco to freelance" types, pay annual dues of $30 or $15 (low income) and receive a feisty monthly newsletter, discounts on a wide variety of courses, forums and social events, and access to a job file. The alliance takes stands on such issues as censorship, journalists' situation in El Salvador, coverage of nuclear issues and Third World media access. And members are eligible to participate in an association health insurance plan.

Anyone can join Media Alliance, and so anyone can take advantage of its health plan. Feel a pregnancy coming on? Just join M.A. before sperm meets ovum and let the insurance company pay for your passion. Insurance companies have figured out this self-selecting aspect of associations and as a consequence restrain their enthusiasm about underwriting such groups. But a few companies plunged into this coverage vacuum, including A.B.L. So vigorously did A.B.L. pursue the private-association business that its rates—$59 monthly plus administrative costs for comprehensive medical and partial dental coverage—were far below market rates, a kind of loss leader, in fact. But it was their 70,000 customers and a lot of doctors who ultimately took the losses.

A tortuous road led M.A. to A.B.L.; getting there was half the misery. Before we took our business to A.B.L. our health coverage had been handled by a conventional insurer, Metropolitan Life. But in June 1980, two months into my tenure as executive director of M.A., the company's Northern California manager informed me that Metropolitan could no longer carry our medical insurance since the 150 M.A. members who then had coverage were not employed by our organization. The company was sorry, the manager said. Its own agent had lied; we were not at fault. Metropolitan would carry us until we could obtain another plan, but out we must go.

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Enter Bulldog Associates (as I'll call them), brokers *ex machina*. The bulldogs were a matched pair. Brian had gone to Yale and seemed to have an endless supply of ties festooned with tiny canines. Esther's educational credentials were never mentioned, but her legs often were (Brian liked to joke about their effect on other clients). Together, and they almost always were, they were enthusiastic and considerate, and they seemed knowledgeable. Even more to the point, they had come to us, and they were the only brokers I knew.

It seems relevant to interject here that, its lack of insurance savvy aside, M.A. is widely perceived by other Bay Area arts and media organizations as a group whose trains run on time. Our benefits raise money, we actually sell advertising in our media-review newspaper and we were the first on our block to offer health insurance. I say all this to give some insight into the bulldogs' interest in us: Brian and Esther saw us—correctly—as the key to making contact with other associations connected to the arts.

After several months of palaver, the bulldogs found us a new plan. Metropolitan had extended its exit deadline several times and was growing impatient, so we were in no position to be picky. The new plan offered competitive rates, dental coverage and a "panel provider" option which gave 100 percent coverage in certain cases. Is the company solid? we asked the brokers. Like granite, barked the bulldogs. So we signed on with Far West, rock of ages.

I had a short conversation with Brian in October 1980 which in hindsight takes on a prophetic quality. "By the way," I asked, "what will your commission be?"

"Well," he laughed, always the pleasant Yalie, "as a matter of principle I really don't feel we should have to open our books to our clients."

Fortunately, the district manager at Metropolitan had prepared me for this. "He won't want to tell you," he had said, "but he has to, by law. If he balks, tell him that you'll eventually get form thus and such from the insurance company and the commission rate is on it, so he might as well tell you now."

I told Brian what I'd been told to tell. There was a slight pause and then he laughed pleasantly and said, "Well, of course that's right and I have no objection at all to your knowing; it's just the principle of the thing. We make 10 percent of premiums."

With 250 members of Media Alliance paying an average of $60 a month, the bulldogs were collecting $1,500 monthly. Initially, they earned it, I suppose. After all, they had to spend time finding a company that would take us on. Then, only months later, Far West folded its tents. Our members were out $25,000 in unpaid claims and they didn't have a medical plan. What, we asked Brian and Esther, is going to happen to us now?

The bulldogs consoled. They took our little hand in theirs and told us that it was, basically, just one of those crazy things. Dishonest People! Unheard Of! Never happened before, couldn't happen again. On top of which . . . Great News! A different company, a solid company, would take over our entire group. Actually, Far West *was* a little shaky, the bulldogs admitted, but the new company was, well, like granite. Its name was American Benefits Limited. Its owner was flying in from L.A. to speak to us personally.

Phil Schweinberg (as I'll call him) talked like a Damon Runyon character—specifically, Sam the Gonoph, who starts out in life dishonest, hence his moniker, but subsequently reforms and "will not think of stealing anything. At least not much, and especially if it is anything that is nailed down." Phil handed us his card, which identified him as Executive Vice President, and explained, "I actually own the company and am the president, but people bug you all the time if they think you run the show." Phil took great glee in describing how his company's fancy footwork had driven Far West to the grave. Naturally, given this picture of reliability, we signed right on.

Some dubious readers may be wondering why we stayed with the brokers who had previously placed us with a defaulting company. Or why we signed with a new company whose representative conveyed all the probity of Hot Horse Herbie. I can only reply that we (I generously share blame here with the heads of all the other associations that eventually went down the A.B.L. tubes) gained our positions by virtue of some expertise in a particular field—media, dance, theater and the like. We often show reasonable proficiency at publishing newspapers, staging events, helping people find work or writing grant proposals. We sometimes even demonstrate a degree of low cunning when it comes to courting funders or militating about issues affecting our constituencies. But it wasn't our expertise in insurance that got us hired. Under pressure, dealing with plausible brokers making convenient representations, we make mistakes.

The extent of the mistake with A.B.L. was not immediately apparent. Phil and his henchpeople inundated us with glorious brochures. They even provided pretty decent service for a while. Little glitches appeared, but help was always on the way. Only it never arrived. In its stead came problems: delayed payments, unfulfilled promises, state licensing squabbles, incipient chaos. Other brokers told me later (and there was no doubt a self-serving aspect to their opinions) that they had been worried about A.B.L. for more than a year and would not do business with them. Brian and Esther had told me at the time that A.B.L. was totally solvent but was being hounded and besmirched by a vindictive state insurance commission which had been burned in the Far West affair. The bulldogs' explanation reminded me of the Yiddish joke with the punch line, "I never borrowed the pot, and furthermore it was broken when you loaned it to me, and what's more I returned it in perfect condition last month." The bulldogs' variant ran: "A.B.L. is fine, and what's more it's solving its problems, and on top of that we're actively looking for another company." Perhaps because they feared it would weaken our resolve, Brian and Esther neglected to mention that A.B.L., like Far West, was a member of a sort of rogue subspecies of insurance companies called "Multiple Employer Trusts" (METs), of which forty-five had gone bankrupt in California since

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1977. Rather than confuse us with information, the bulldogs urged us to hang tough.

Brian and Esther did more than hang tough. They solicited virtually every arts-related association in the Bay Area and, citing our participation in the A.B.L. plan, they signed on an additional 400 people that I know of and probably several hundred others. The bulldogs' monthly commissions rose to at least $5,000, while their overhead rose by the cost of a half-time secretary/troubleshooter. With more customers and higher premiums on the horizon, the bulldogs had their teeth firmly sunk into a juicy leg of nonprofit lamb.

Before the bulldogs' net profits could rise any further, however, the state's net ensnared A.B.L. Armed with newly enacted legislation, the California Corporation Department convinced a judge to put the company in receivership on the grounds that it was insolvent and operating illegally (before the legislation was passed, Multiple Employer Trusts in California frolicked in a regulatory no man's land between state and Federal laws). After a week of investigation, the receiver announced that the company was "grossly mismanaged [and] hopelessly insolvent." Some of the receiver's other findings lend credence to the Sam the Gonoph analogy: A.B.L., it turned out, promptly mailed checks to people who complained about late payment or filed claims for less than $100; other checks were written and stuffed in boxes. Forty-eight boxes of unmailed checks worth about $4.5 million were found in one of A.B.L.'s offices.

While reading the receiver's comments in the *Los Angeles Times* I remembered a phone call I had gotten some months before from one of our more querulous members, whose name was notorious in our office; his calls, over the years, always began with woe and ended with threats—the check was late, the insurance company hadn't returned his call, we-they-everybody would hear from his lawyer and so forth. But this time, "notorious" sang a different tune. Finally, he said, we had found a decent insurer. A check had been late (anything other than return mail is late, for "notorious"), he had called A.B.L. and, presto, the check was in his hand. Well, I thought as I put the phone down, maybe hanging tough with the bulldogs and A.B.L. makes sense.

The bulldogs were nothing if not tenacious in the wake of A.B.L.'s capsizing. "This is terrible news," Brian confided to me the next day, "but I'm pretty sure we can find another plan to step in." At this point it occurred to me that Brian placed no limits whatsoever on our credulity. What's a couple of bankruptcies between a broker and a client, anyway? I told Brian that I looked forward to learning about our options.

Even before A.B.L.'s collapse, Media Alliance and two other Bay Area associations—all of us strung out on the A.B.L.-bulldog line—had agreed to band together to quietly explore the possibility of securing better coverage by pooling our bargaining power; together, we had more than 500 people on the plan.

When A.B.L. went belly up the pace quickened. We actively solicited other brokers' offers. We also decided that since it was conceivable that only Brian and Esther would come up with a takeover plan right away, we wouldn't burn our bulldogs behind us until we knew we had another option.

In fact, other brokers fell out of the trees. At one point I was negotiating with eight brokers, who were soliciting and/or presenting plans from fifteen companies. Which is not to say that we had fifteen options. Some of the plans had drawbacks such as the exclusion of individuals who were undergoing any kind of medical treatment (i.e., health insurance for the healthy only). Other plans were offered by companies incorporated in states with notoriously weak regulatory laws. Still others were from . . . Multiple Employer Trusts. The only thing the plans had in common was the verve and confidence with which they were touted to us. Each, we were told, was the very very best plan for us, and probably the only one that would take us. Each broker muttered darkly about the schemes presented by the other brokers: "I don't have full confidence in that company. . . . Did business with them once, but never again. . . . People in the industry have their doubts."

It would be an overstatement to say that we felt on top of the situation, but we were a lot better off than we had been after Far West bailed out. We had finally realized that no one who lives off commissions is going to place our interests before his own. It would take a great deal of work to sift out the dross, but this time we were determined to do it. When brokers asked for a letter of exclusive authorization, I told them, "At this point, we simply have to talk to everyone who might be able to help us find what we need. I'm prepared to look closely at whatever comes in, and if you're willing to proceed on that basis, please do so." Oddly enough, they were all willing to proceed.

The plum, our consortium's business, went to a new team of brokers, and at this writing, two months later, I'm not sure what to make of them. They are either perfectly splendid or our insurance education has still more doleful lessons to offer. But as a token of good faith and high hopes, I will call these brokers by their real names, Skip Robinson and Lisa Max.

No bulldogs festoon Skip's tie. In fact, no tie festoons Skip's collar for the simple reason that no collar adorns Skip's T-shirt. Since the bulldogs had conclusively demonstrated that snappy outfits do not guarantee snappy service, I suppose I should have been heartened by Skip's attire. Likewise, Lisa's large, omnipresent poodle should have made my heart soar; Esther, after all, had been determinedly dogless when dealing with clients. But paranoia had struck deep, so when I asked Lisa for references and she showed me a letter which read, in its entirety, "Lisa: You are our broker of record; I love you," I, like Job, thought, "Good Lord, if it's not one thing, it's another."

Nonetheless, working with Skip and Lisa *has* been another thing entirely, and I mean that positively. They do what they say they will do and, more to the point, they do it for a 1.8 percent commission. They actually have more

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substantial references than the one quoted above; in fact, they have a superb reputation in the nonprofit community. The plan they found for us is backed by an established insurance company (not a MET) and everything has run smoothly so far. In their dealings with us, Skip and Lisa have been loyal, trustworthy, kind and true. I plan to watch them like a hawk.

I told that to Skip the other day, in those words. He responded that he found it somewhat insulting and, rather than operate under a cloud of suspicion, he would prefer not to represent us. I navigated the squall by telling him that I understood his reaction but that he should understand how badly we had been bitten. I added that the "hawk" reference was simply a metaphor for a short-term position of extreme caution, after which I anticipated we would have a long-term relationship of complete trust.

All of that was true, as is the fact that I like Skip and Lisa. The only problem is, I liked Brian and Esther. Gosh, the fun we had figuring out how we were going to publicize the A.B.L. plan once the little bugs were ironed out. It's unfair to hold Skip and Lisa accountable for the bulldogs' sins—and the difference in commissions is important testimony as to the difference in approach—but it is fair, I think, to say that the crucial question should not be: "Do we like our brokers and do they have good intentions?"

A better question would be: "How does U.S. Steel go about meeting the insurance needs of its employees?" The answer is: "By wielding its economic clout and putting together the best package possible." U.S. Steel has more clout to wield than does Media Alliance, and it certainly employs cannier wielders. But the principle is the same.

As matters stand now, of course, Media Alliance members are holding about $75,000 in medical bills that A.B.L. was supposed to have paid but didn't. There's also a little matter of $25,000 outstanding from the Far West era. On our members' behalf, and with the help of *pro bono* attorneys, we are bird-dogging the receivership and evaluating the precise nature of the bulldogs' legal liability. In the best-case scenario, we'll get some of the money back, after a long wait. The worst-case scenario is not only obvious but probable. In the face of this, it is both the best and worst aspect of the whole fiasco that our members seem to have an incredible reservoir of patience, even gratitude. They thank us for finding a new plan so quickly. They thank us for trying—with total futility to date—to recover on the outstanding bills. They are totally desperate for health insurance and totally befuddled by it. Consequently, they settle for so little, just as Media Alliance settled for so little in its dealings with the bulldogs.

I recently spoke with one member who was not as benign as her comrades. I had sent out a long mailing describing our efforts to find a new plan. I was tired and felt that I'd done a damn good salvage job under difficult circumstances. But she was unhappy with the mailing. It was fine to have a new plan, she said, but she had her last $4,000 tied up in doctors' bills for which she had been expecting reimbursement, and she had expected my letter to address that issue more concretely than it did.

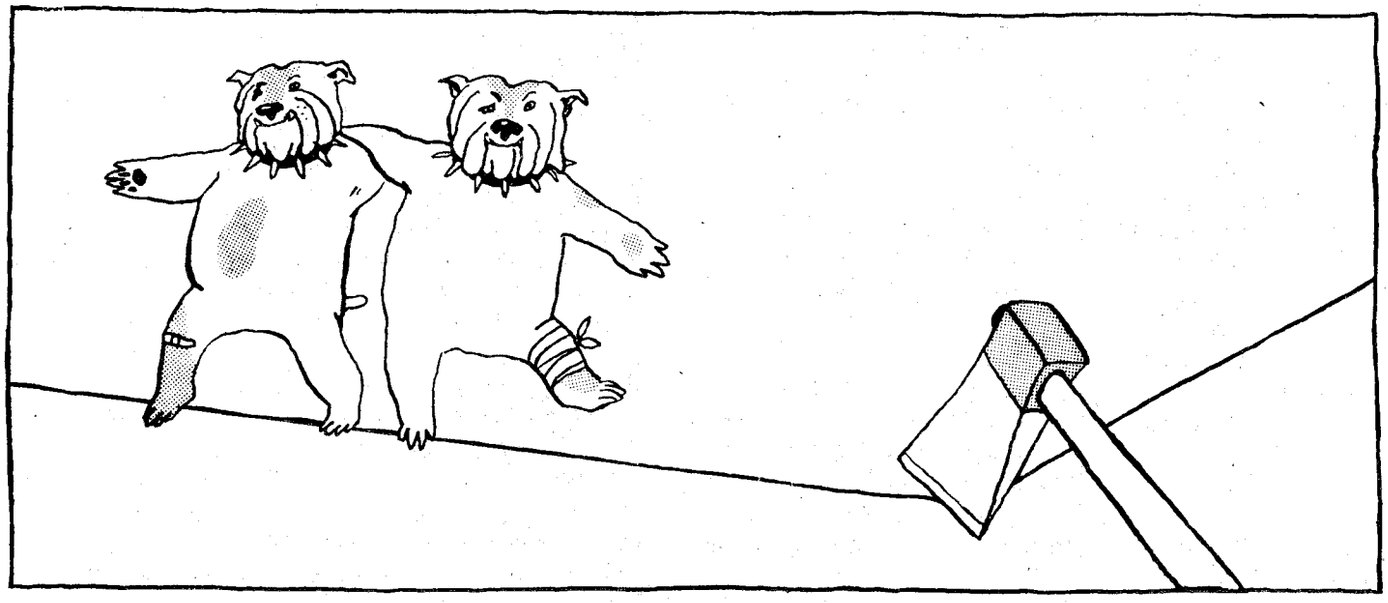
I told her, with some irritation, that recovery of the money would take time, that getting a new plan came first and that she should get off my case. Didn't she trust me, I asked.

Trust, she said, had nothing to do with it. She had lost her money and, what made it even worse, she had no idea who had done what with it. She said some people had advised her to learn more about her insurance company, but she had not wanted to undertake that responsibility. It had been easier to "leave it to Media Alliance." She wasn't going to do that anymore.

It was late, I was cranky, she annoyed the hell out of me. But she was also right. Trust is swell, but cut the cards.

Wait, I must soften that. Not just as a gesture toward kindly human relations but because, as Alexander Pope put it so well in an early draft: "In some areas, particularly those involving a high degree of technical competence, it is desirable to be either expert or totally guided by experts; eschew dabbling."

Surely, though, we—Media Alliance's members, Media



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Alliance and similar groups that try so earnestly to do fine things while offering health insurance and the like in their spare time—err most often in the direction of total ignorance and unwisely placed trust. A little learning could be a very salutary thing. □

NATIONALISM AND SOCIALISM

Israel's Dual Heritage

AMOS KENAN

I was born in Tel Aviv, in 1927. I am a born Jew, a born Zionist and a born Israeli. A human being has a temporal field of vision that stretches from grandparents to grandchildren, and this means almost a whole century. My own memory goes back to when I first could digest what my grandparents and my parents told me.

My parents were born in Russia and came to Palestine after World War I, after the Russian Revolution. Not only were they born in Russia; their Zionism was born there also. Their concept of what kind of life they would have and what meaning it would hold was born in Europe. Zionism was born in Europe. It is an ideology conceived in Europe and implemented in the Middle East. Part of the inner contradiction of Zionism—of whatever sort, left wing or right, socialist or revisionist—stems from the fact that it is not native to the land it came to shape.

My family was a socialist family, like most that settled in Palestine at that time. My father had been a student of political science at the University of Rostov and came at the age of 19 to be a laborer; like most settlers then, he was an intellectual who became a member of the working class by faith. He joined the Workers' Battallion, founded by the legendary Joseph Trumpeldor, clearing the marshes and opening the desert and, later on, working in construction.

There were several waves—*aliyot*—of settlement in Palestine. The first was in 1882, the second began in 1905, the third began in 1917. The dates are not coincidental: they mark a wave of pogroms, a revolution that failed and was followed by more pogroms and a revolution that succeeded but was followed by still more pogroms.

The settlers of the first *aliya* were peasants who employed Arabs as laborers and guards. Those of the second—Ben-Gurion's—and third—my father's—were Russian socialists, and it was through them that Israel was born; the state of Israel was a projection of Russian socialism on everyone in the area, on Britons, on Jews, on Arabs. Even the slogan "In blood and fire Judea will rise," which was adopted by the Irgun under Menachem Begin, was invented by Russian socialists and brought to Palestine by Ben-Gurion's comrades. It became the slogan of the Hashomer society, the band of settlers who took on the task of defending the tiny Zionist settlements against Arab attacks. Dressed precisely like Bedouins, they rode horses, carried fancy guns and wore bandoleers, but in their minds was the idea of building a socialist society.

Of course it would be a Jewish socialist society. Nobody thought that Arabs should play any part in a future socialist state. In fact the socialists, scorning the first *aliya*, advanced the idea of "Hebrew work" and "Hebrew defense," tasks to be taken from the Arabs so that an authentic working class and not a master race would become the heart of the Zionist state. Socialism in reality, despite the dreams, is not internationalist. The triumphs of these first Russian socialists in Palestine planted the seeds of future conflict.

Nationalism—which in the Israeli context was eventually known as revisionism—came to Palestine much later than socialism, but it too was a completely foreign ideology. Israeli socialism and the kibbutz are Russian-born and of the pre-World War I period; Israeli nationalism and the Irgun are Polish-born and from the period between the wars.

Poland at that time was a country where "socialism" meant Russia, a national enemy, a historical oppressor. Young Jewish intellectuals in Warsaw fell under the sway of Joseph Pilsudski, the Polish nationalist who denounced Russia and sought with his quasi-fascist regime to preserve the independence of Poland. For them the syllogism worked this way: The Soviet Union is an enemy of Polish nationalism, so it is an enemy of all kinds of nationalism, including the Jewish one, including the Zionist one. In the Soviet Union, Zionism is forbidden and Zionists are persecuted. The Soviet Union is socialist. Therefore true Zionism cannot be socialist.

Nationalism works with bravado, with parades and fanfare, with speeches and militarism. In Palestine, it was embodied in the Betarim, a youth organization that was formed in the early 1920s in opposition to the socialist Zionists.

The Betarim held parades and wore brown shirts. They thought that the land of Palestine should be taken from the Arabs in blood and fire, not bought with money. Most of them were unemployed, since the state employment office was controlled by the Histadrut, the socialist union federation, and it wouldn't find jobs for nonsocialists. So they used violence at Histadrut picket lines to break up strikes.

Most of them were in Palestine illegally. The British immigration policy established a quota for Jews, and it was enforced by an agency controlled by the socialists. The agency saw to it that only two categories of Jews could come to Palestine legally: those who could show assets of 1,000 pounds sterling and those who belonged to socialist organizations. To get around this, the Betarim opened a naval school in Civitavecchia, Italy, where captains were trained to land ships illegally on the Palestine coast.

In the optic of my childhood, the British belonged. Just as the Turks before them. The notion of "imperialism," of "colonialism," was as yet unknown to me. If there were

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clashes between the British and the Jews, they were largely born of fear that the British were favoring the Arabs over the Jews.

The socialists not only did not oppose British imperialism as such, they coveted leadership of the liberal-bourgeois world Zionist movement. Ben-Gurion and his friends had the soldiers and the pioneers who cleared the land and covered it with kibbutzim (the kibbutz system served simultaneously as the cradle of socialism, the embryo of national independence and the substructure of a sophisticated economy). But the world Zionist movement had the money, and controlling the movement meant controlling that money. Thus capitalism was essential in building a socialist power, a contradiction that nobody recognized.

(Like every good socialist child, I joined a left-wing youth organization. I remember one day asking my instructor if it was really all right to drive Arab peasants from the land just because we bought it from rich Arab landlords. Did the fact that we bought it legally and did not, say, take it by war make the act socialist enough?)

Nationalist or socialist, most of the Zionist movement felt, as I did when I was a child, that the British belonged. Ben-Gurion, like Herzl, was brought up in a world where a British Empire was part of a divine order and Israel would come into being only through its graces. Vladimir Jabotinsky, the Russian writer and bourgeois liberal who was the founder of the Irgun, believed the same, differing only in thinking that by showing force the Zionists could get British support.

It is very important as a contrast to consider a group ignored or dismissed as politically insignificant by most historians: the Canaanites. They made their appearance in 1940, a small band of intellectuals, the first organization that was born in Palestine, not transplanted from Europe. Ironically, it was militantly anti-Zionist.

The Canaanites were the first Jews to hold that the British did not belong in Palestine, and the first to proclaim sovereignty for a new nation, a Hebrew nation, that would have nothing to do with world Jewry and the Diaspora, nothing to do with Jewish religion. They declared that Arabs were and should be members of this new Hebrew nation, provided they became Hebraic and spoke Hebrew: after all, they said, both Judaism and Islam were foreign to the real Hebrew culture that in antiquity flourished in the whole region of the fertile crescent, from Lebanon to Iraq.

They wrote some beautiful poems, some less beautiful polemics, and then disappeared. But not without leaving this legacy: that Israel should be a new nation, sovereign and independent of any foreign power. That has come to pass.

In the same year that the Canaanites were born, the Stern Gang was founded. Led by Abraham Stern, a disciple of Jabotinsky, it was the first Jewish organization to fight the British, and it did so even as they both were fighting a common enemy, Hitler's Germany.

Strangely enough, there was a Canaanite strain in Stern's philosophy. He argued that the liberation of Palestine—Eretz Israel—should have priority over every other cause, even the solidarity of the world Jewish community. It was this "blasphemy" that set the Stern Gang in opposition to the Irgun. The Irgun had joined forces with Britain, and its first commander, David Raziel, was killed while on a mission in Iraq to help the British. Irgun leaders declared open season on the Stern Gang and turned in its members to the British secret police. (In fact, it was not until 1944, when the Allies' eventual victory became evident, that the Irgun declared war on Britain.)

Toward the end of the war the Stern Gang began to move in a new direction. Using the model of the French resistance movement and the anticolonial movements that had started to emerge in all parts of the French and British empires, it began to develop a clear anticolonial philosophy and a nascent identity with the Third World.

At the end of 1946, I crossed the line from the quietism of my leftist youth organization and joined the Stern Gang. My organization had been publishing the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and paying lip service to anti-imperialism while at the same time turning over freedom fighters to the British. One day it dawned on me that the deed is more important than the slogan, and if there is a contradiction between the two, it is the deed that speaks the truth—even if the deed doesn't know the proper words.

Maybe I was mistaken then. Maybe it's the manifesto that counts, not the deed. But—maybe I was not mistaken then. Maybe I was right—even though the remnants of the Irgun and the Stern Gang are now in power in a right-wing Israel which treats Arab guerrillas as "terrorists," just as they were treated by the British.

In the end, the British left Palestine in haste, before an anticolonial movement could mature and come to power and make an Israel which would be part of the Third World, not opposed to it and by it. Which is, by the way, an old trick of imperialism: to hand over power to a leadership friendly to it.

I have a feeling that sometime along in there, before 1948, there was a very short springtime of the spirit of revolution—and then it petered out. But I can't prove it. □

Cold War Pawn

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

"scientist"—the Russian word for academics like me—from the Institute for the Study of the United States and Canada, Moscow's leading think tank on American affairs, who would soon be visiting the Bay area. I agreed, eager to learn how knowledgeable Russian specialists on the United States were.

At least in the case of this one, the answer was very knowledgeable. Sasha turned out to be five years younger than I, bookish, astonishingly fluent in English and familiar with even the most esoteric theories about the way

Alan Wolfe is a member of The Nation*'s editorial board. His most recent book,* America's Impasse, *has just been issued in paperback by South End Press.*

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American politics works. No dogmatic Marxist-Leninist determined to squeeze the complexity of American society into categories inherited from the nineteenth century, Sasha spoke deprecatingly about his country and admiringly of the United States (if this was a ploy to win my confidence it was the wrong one), and all in all was a pleasure to talk with. We hit it off quickly, and when the suggestion emerged—spontaneously on both our parts—that I come to Moscow to lecture at his institute, the pleasure on my side was not only at the prospect of my first visit to the Soviet Union but also at the thought of talking with Sasha again.

All of this took place in 1976, and when I heard nothing further I assumed that the Russian bureaucracy had vetoed the idea of my visit. But in the spring of 1977 Dmitri was back at my door with a list of possible dates. Still skeptical, I picked October, long enough before the summer Olympics that I might find someone willing to talk to me but far enough in the future that I might finish my manuscript. Everything happened with dispatch after that. Dmitri invited me to the consulate, the visa was ready and I went out and bought my Super Apex ticket from Pan Am. (I had agreed to go on the condition that I pay my plane fare; the Russians, as is customary on such visits, put me up while I was there.)

My visit to the Soviet Union was one of the most unpleasant interludes in my adult life. I survived the fruit and vegetable deprivation, but I never thought I would survive a visit to a hospital in Yerevan, where the local doctors were determined to operate on me, a determination nullified only by my threats to walk out in my gown and find my own way back to Moscow. Still, the formal meetings at the institute were enlightening. I discovered that the older and more rigid generation of specialists was being passed over in favor of people like Sasha, of whom there were many. I was surprised by their reaction to the thesis of my forthcoming book, which was an effort to show that anti-Soviet hysteria in the United States had more to do with American domestic politics than with Soviet foreign policy. I expected right-wing Americans to disagree with me, but it had not occurred to me that Russians would as well. In their view, anti-Soviet attitudes in the United States were a legitimate response to the great gains and progressive foreign policy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In Moscow I was given tours of the usual places, and for each tour I had a specialist guide in addition to the personal guide who was with me at all times. (In Yerevan I had three full-time guides and a driver.) As far as I could tell, the purpose of the guides was to prevent anything spontaneous from happening—as, for example, when I bumped into an American friend on the street and we were both hurried along in different directions so that we almost had to yell at each other. But as I would later learn, the guides had another function. On one tour, my guide informed me that he would soon be transferred to New York and asked permission to call me when he arrived. (I, too, was moving to New York, having accepted my present position at Queens College.) I told him how to get in touch with me, still convinced that, as an independent writer and thinker, I would maintain contact with both sides in the cold war.

"Hello Alan, this is Peter," the voice said over the phone. "Remember me? We met in Moscow." It was well over a year after my visit and, truth be told, I did not remember him well. But now he was in New York and he wanted to get together and chat. We did. The meeting seemed to me completely without purpose, as if he had been given a checklist of people to call and could not wait until I left so he could add another check mark to it. He asked a few questions about the 1980 campaign, offered his own depressingly conventional opinions and hurriedly suggested that if it was all right with me, perhaps we could meet again.

This went on for two more visits, each more boring and seemingly meaningless than the previous one. By then I was convinced that Peter was working in some capacity, no doubt a fairly unimportant one, for the K.G.B. and that one of his assignments was to maintain regular contact with "progressive" American writers. Quick calls through my network turned up two friends who also regularly received phone calls from Peter, and while one of them thought him bright and worth talking to, the other shared my impression that the whole business was a waste of time.

The next time Peter called I gave him an excuse for not meeting him. But he was quite persistent, calling once every two months (from pay phones: all Russians call from pay phones) and asking me for another meeting. Finally I put a stop to it, telling him I saw no point in our meeting ever again and asking him nicely to leave me alone. He did. I have not heard from Peter, or from any other Russians, for the past eighteen months.

But I did hear from the Americans. The message was left on my answering machine one day last month: "This is Mr. Klein. Can you call me at 553-2700?" I returned the call, heard the receptionist say "S.B.I." and was connected to a secretary who told me that Klein was not at his desk. "What is S.B.I?" I asked her, thinking it was the usual collection agency. "Aren't you an American?" she responded, taking me aback. "I think so," I retorted. "And you never heard of the F.B.I.?" Aha, I told myself, this is it. An hour later Klein called back and told me that he wanted to meet to discuss an extremely sensitive matter involving Russian nationals. I requested a week to mull it over, and when he called once more, I agreed to see him at my house.

Klein was prompt and, as I expected, not alone. The two F.B.I. agents were clearly a team, one (Klein) straight as an arrow, serious, conservatively dressed, the other ("Call me Phil") casual, unofficial, direct. After much mental anguish, I decided not to offer them coffee on the grounds that it would implicate me in their schemes.

MAJOR AWARD TO POLLITT

The National Book Critics Circle has selected *Antarctic Traveller*, by Katha Pollitt, literary editor of *The Nation*, as the best poetry book of 1982.

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They began exactly as Dmitri had when he appeared in my office at Berkeley. "A busy man like yourself, Dr. Wolfe," Klein started, "may not be fully aware of the people who are interested in what you have to say." "You see, Alan," Phil interjected, "the spy business is a serious affair." Come to the point, I said to myself. They did. They were, to my surprise, not interested in Peter. They wanted me to tell them everything I knew about six other Russians working in the United States, all of whom they believed to be agents of the K.G.B.

Any uncertainty I had about whether to cooperate or inform became irrelevant when I realized that none of the names meant a thing to me. I could say, truthfully, that there was no way I could help them. Was I aware, they continued, that the Soviet Union was attempting to influence the peace movement in the United States? I told them that I knew the President thought so, but that, unlike certain prominent American writers, I did not trust *Reader's Digest* on the subject of Communism. (This arcane reference passed them by.) "Do you believe *Reader's Digest*?" I asked. Klein replied that, if forced to take a yes-or-no position, his answer was most definitely yes.

My visitors went on to suggest that a major goal of the Soviet "disinformation campaign" was to contact and influence prominent writers, "including men like yourself, Dr. Wolfe." (I wish, I wish, I murmured.) "It is my working hypothesis," Klein said, sounding more and more like a political scientist and less and less like a spy, "that the Soviets have increased their efforts in this regard drastically in the past eighteen months." I told them that my personal experience "disconfirmed" his hypothesis, for they used to contact me, but no longer did. His ears perked up. Who contacted me? he asked.

I then proceeded to tell the F.B.I. about Peter, on the condition that I not use his name and give no clues about his real identity. They asked one question about his "alleged profession" but, when I said that was too specific, asked no more. They told me that this was classic K.G.B. procedure, that I was smart to have stopped talking to him (though, had I not, maybe they would have asked me to continue so I could furnish them more information) and that I should be sensitive to future Russian attempts to "disinform" me. "We are here to help you," they said, almost in unison. "Feel free to call us any time you need or want help."

Now it was my time to question them. "Is your visit here part of the effort recently launched by the Reagan Administration to discredit the peace movement?" I began. Of course not, they responded; this is standard procedure and has been going on for years. Then, I countered, what did they make of the statement by Edward O'Malley, Assistant Director of the F.B.I., reported in that morning's *New York Times*, that no evidence could be found that the leaders of the U.S. peace movement had been influenced by Soviet attempts to manipulate them? I had them. As I suspected, they had not read that morning's *Times*, and my mention of O'Malley (their boss) made them blanch. Their job, they claimed, was to protect Americans, and since I was an American, they were here to protect me.

"O.K.," I continued, "why me?" It is all very sensitive, Klein replied, and we can't be too specific, but we were monitoring a conversation between two alleged K.G.B. agents and one of them mentioned your name. "In what context?" I asked eagerly. "They said that you were giving a speech at Hofstra University and that you were probably worth hearing. Did you know that presumed K.G.B. agents were in the audience at Hofstra?" they asked. When I said no, they told me that the Russians had also attended a talk I gave two weeks earlier in Manhattan, where I shared the platform with a prominent New York politician (they mentioned his name but did not seem to know who he was).

"If you know that Russians were in the audience," I said, "then you guys must have been in the audience as well." Klein said he could not comment, but Phil smiled broadly and told me to draw my own conclusions. So, I thought, there I was giving a talk to an enthusiastic audience, unaware that spies from both parties to the cold war had nothing better to do on a Sunday morning than listen to me. Flattering, but a trifle disturbing too.

I asked the F.B.I. men whether they would object to my writing about their visit. They said no, as long as I did not use their correct names, and, with a few pats on the head of the resident Irish setter, off they went. And off I went, to my typewriter, to knock out this report.

This is no tale of a Timerman-like confrontation with the secret police, no account of days spent in hell. It is far more pathetic than that, on all sides. The Wolfe Case, in short, is an extremely low-level operation. But so many people these days are concerned about charges of disinformation and Soviet attempts to penetrate the U.S. peace movement that a comment from one object of this attention seems in order. Why do agents of the two most powerful governments in the world find it necessary to occupy the time of a somewhat obscure and in any case powerless observer of the contemporary scene?

Two things about the Russian operation are clear. The first is that the Soviet Union does try to "influence" American opinion by maintaining contact with any Americans it can. The second is that the Russians are incompetent when they do so. This incompetence, however, is not due to the shortcomings of the agents involved. It has a historical explanation, one that the police mentality cannot seem to understand.

I have yet to meet a single writer of my generation and temperament who *likes* the Soviet Union. About the most that can be said for it is that while the United States always supports the wrong side, at least the Soviet Union has helped the cause of progress, sometimes inadvertently, by aiding revolutions in the Third World. That is the best case. Many of my friends on the left hold a far more critical view: that the Russians stand condemned as enemies of human freedom and a curse on the prospects of genuine socialism. There is no metaphysical reason for this feeling. The Russians are disliked because they are dislikable. No Russian agent, K.G.B. or otherwise, can come to the United States

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nd be welcomed as a comrade, except by those already so solated by their apologetics that their word is thoroughly listrusted. The major obstacle to Soviet attempts to influence American writers is the Soviet Union.

Take the Wolfe Case. At the height of the Vietnam War, hat monstrous affair timed so perfectly to accord exactly vith my political education, my hostility toward my own ;overnment was so overwhelming that I leaned to less than otal hostility toward the Soviet Union. Voicing the notion hat the enemy of our enemy must be our friend, I was a ripe :andidate for Soviet influence. Yet what has happened? Without being too dramatic, I have slowly, and to myself mperceptibly, moved toward the other position, that the Soviet Union violates just about every standard of political ustice in which I believe. A different note has crept into my vritings, an effort to balance my criticisms of one superpower with criticisms of the other. When Peter called me to have coffee, he was calling someone who had just watched the first real workers' revolution of his time suppressed by an alien government, and it sure as hell was not the capitalists who did it. How could a lone Soviet agent, and a boring one at that, out-influence history, especially a history as clear-cut and morally unambiguous as that of Poland? Only an F.B.I. agent could believe that he could.

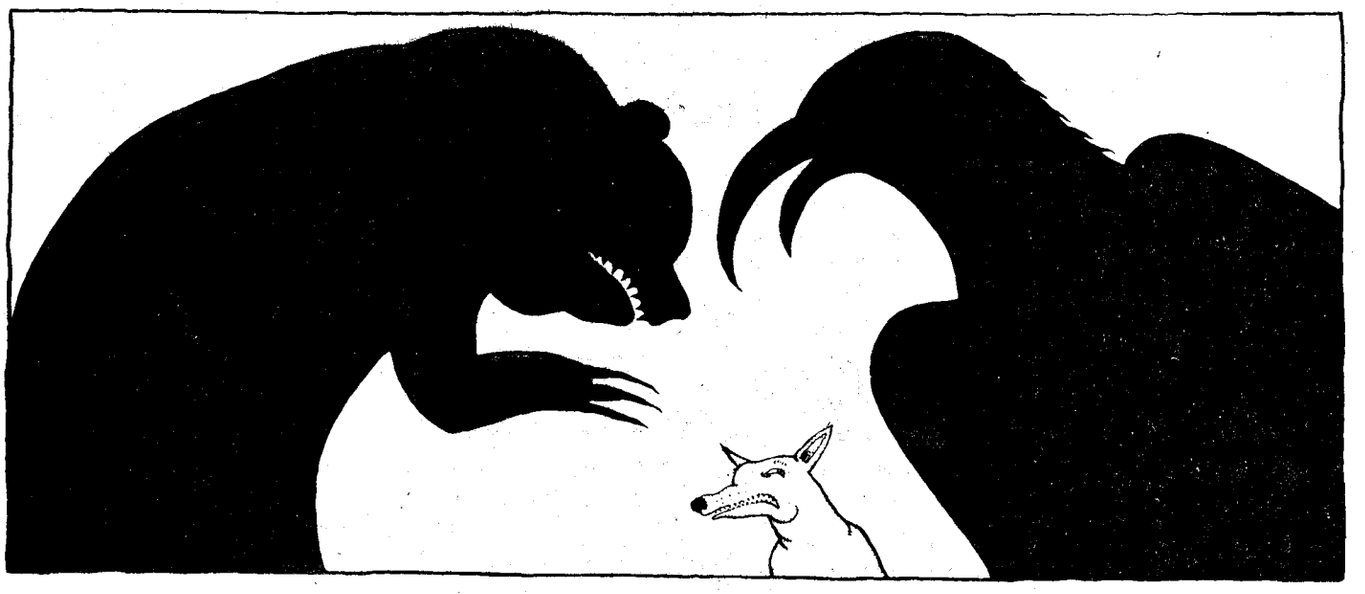
I needed no warnings from the F.B.I. to resist Soviet attempts to "influence" me; Soviet foreign and domestic policy had already accomplished that. If anything, my visit from the F.B.I. had the opposite effect, reminding me of the 1960s and why I had come to distrust my own government so much.

A problem peculiar to our time is how to distance oneself from one side in the cold war without falling into the clutches of the other. For every Soviet apologist I have encountered, there are ten on the opposite side who have lost their moral outrage at the United States in their eagerness to condemn Russia. As I grew more critical of the Soviet Union, I wondered if I too would moderate my hostility toward U.S. meddling in the Third World. I need not have worried. A supremely anti-Communist Administration like Ronald Reagan's is all one needs to remind oneself of the moral vacuousness of American foreign policy.

Like most anti-Communists who denounce the Soviet Union as a police state, Ronald Reagan wants to beef up the operations of the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. in this country. My visit from the F.B.I. agents, their denials to the contrary, was clearly inspired by Reagan's charge that the Soviet Union is pulling the strings of the U.S. peace movement. This, to anyone involved in these matters, is nonsense, and there has been a good deal of righteous denunciation of such blatant attempts to influence the domestic dialogue.

I fear an unleashed F.B.I. for all the appropriate civil liberties reasons, but something else bothers me as well, and it lies at the heart of my problem with the K.G.B. Police agents are singularly ill-equipped to understand the hubris that underlies their mission. They believe that they can intervene in history, above and beyond the actions of their governments. Yet the F.B.I. can no more counter the reaction against Ronald Reagan's policies than the K.G.B. can limit the damage of Gdansk. What spurs the peace movement is war and the preparations for it. If the F.B.I. wants to know why the peace movement is growing, it should investigate the man who sent it to find out.

Most writers complain of being ignored, and I have been known to add my voice to the litany. It is refreshing, I guess, to find out that one is being read, even if only by spies. I might even overcome my deepest inhibitions and write about the Middle East, for there are so many covert agents working there that I could quickly triple my audience. We might even understand one another, since all of us are in the business of trying to shape events. But I doubt that we would, for, as paid agents of one side or the other, they seem unable to comprehend that some of us value independence from both. Ironically, I can remain interesting to the police agents of the world only by keeping aloof from their sometimes comic attempts to keep tabs on one another, and so aloof from both them and their governments is how I plan to stay. □



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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Anti-Federalists, Arise!

JOHN H. SCHAAR

EXPLAINING AMERICA: The Federalist. *By Garry Wills. Doubleday and Company. 384 pp. $14.95. Penguin Books $5.95.*

Garry Wills has now reached the halfway mark in his effort to rediscover the American Founding. *Inventing America* traced "Jefferson's Declaration of Independence" back to its source in the Scottish Enlightenment. The present volume, *Explaining America*, examines *The Federalist*. Next will come *Building America: The Constitution*. The series will end with *Judging America: The Supreme Court*, releasing Hercules to his well-earned rest.

Explaining is a leaner book than *Inventing*, and a pleasure to read: it's at once solid and lively, learned and lucid. Wills respects Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay—who together, under the nom de plume "Publius," wrote *The Federalist*—as thinkers and politicians of high stature, and his praise of them is as just as his knowledge of them is deep. Wills is a strong and skillful arguer, and a fair one too. He takes on the other main contenders in the field of *Federalist* criticism and wins most rounds. Later on I shall question whether his own reading of *The Federalist* is right, but he does show that the other, most widely accepted readings are largely wrong.

Wills correctly points out (following Douglass Adair) that before Charles Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* of 1913, no commentator had taken essays Nos. 10 and 51—where Madison argues that the "extended republic" based on representation is the system best suited for controlling the evils of faction and securing the blessings of liberty—as having any special importance for understanding the whole *Federalist* or the Constitution or the American political system. Beard changed all that. He put No. 10 at the center, where it has remained ever since. It remains there in Wills's book too. Thus, while Wills argues effectively that Beard (as well as Robert Dahl, Elmer Schattschneider and James MacGregor Burns) is wrong in his readings of Nos. 10 and 51, he supposes him right in thinking those papers to be the foundation and center of the whole work.

Wills argues that *The Federalist* did not emerge from the class biases of its authors, was not designed to further the interests of *any* part of the community and is in no way the antidemocratic, people-hating tract that Beard and other Progressives imagined it to be. Beard's economic interpretation merely reveals the biases of his own thinking and his ignorance of the sources of the thinking of Hamilton and Madison. Nor is the work the shabby piece of political theory that Robert Dahl found it to be—a work "shot through with assumptions and arguments that do not stand up under criticism" and whose "nice distinctions" are "at bottom arbitrary." The authors of *The Federalist*, says Dahl, "misunderstood the dynamics of their own society" and "did not know what they were doing." Dahl makes Publius out an ignoramus in politics and a duffer in logic. But, as Wills correctly says, Dahl merely substituted his own assumptions for Publius's, seemingly without knowing that he did so.

James MacGregor Burns also comes under fire. He saw Nos. 10 and 51 as masterpieces of the vicious art of obstruction and the Constitution as a system built to trammel creative leadership in the snares of separated powers and checks and balances, tiring the firmest wills, clouding the noblest visions, producing the "deadlock of democracy" (read "frustrating the Kennedys"). Whereas Beard saw *The Federalist* as an argument for elite rule, Burns sees it as an argument for infirm rule. And both, according to Wills, are wrong. *The Federalist* is an argument throughout for vigorous leadership of a certain kind. I think Wills is right about that.

Once this brush has been cleared away, Wills's own Publius appears, and a noble figure he is. Wills's Publius was the true "public man," the "man of the people." His was "a world of the classical virtues reborn." For him, "the concept of public virtue had a hard and clear meaning, a heft and weightiness of the real, no longer apparent to us." He aimed to create "a new age free of cant and restored to republican simplicity, a kind of secular Eden." His vision was that of "the virtuous ruler serving not for private gain but out of pride in his own virtue; impartial; not consulting any interest but 'the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.'" "Without him and his life, without their ideals, their virtuous labors for the common good, there would have been no America to be preserved and passed on."

Furthermore, Wills argues, Publius grounded this vision and proved its practicality with arguments drawn from the benign world of Scottish social science, with its belief in human benevolence and sociality. Publius owed everything to Hume, nothing to the "selfish system" of Hobbes and Locke. Scottish social science showed the practicality of the republic of virtue. America provided the proving ground. Hamilton and Madison designed the experiment and analyzed the results.

It is a bold thesis, if not a novel one (Douglass Adair traced Hume's influence on *The Federalist* forty years ago, though Wills sees the hand of Hume in far more places than Adair did). Yet, far more interesting than the thesis itself is what it assumes. Wills seems to believe that what matters in thinking about politics is the intellectual background of the thinker. Publius was not so sure of that. He was at pains from the first Number to say that what matters most in politics are motive, purpose, interest and passion. Reason—intellectual outlook—can give form to these energies, but it is lifeless without them. Surely Wills knows that it was Hume himself who taught that "reason is, and ought to be, only the slave of the passions."

Publius also knew that he was engaged in a political argument, not delivering a lecture in political science. By choosing to read *The Federalist* as an exposition of Scottish social science as against the "selfish system" of Hobbes and Locke, Wills partially escapes our liberalist tendency to reduce the "problem of self-government" to "the individual versus society," or "majority rule versus minority rights," or "liberty versus authority"—all those foolish

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dichotomies which have reduced most American thought about politics to a series of ritual grimaces. But he comes no closer to the real issues at stake in Publius's contest for the American future.

Publius sets out those stakes vigorously and at length in the first fourteen Numbers, which, save for No. 10, Wills all but ignores. The problem, Publius says, is that the Americans are suffering from an excess of "republican zeal." This hangover from the glorious days of the Revolution has left them dangerously devoted to "local institutions" and "particular interests." They fear union and the strong central government needed to maintain it. False politicians—whether out of sinister motives or childish faith in the power of idealistic and patriotic feelings—are playing upon this fear and zeal, and if they succeed, the future is lost. Commerce and industry will languish; property will not be secure and debts will not be honored; public and private credit will dissolve. The states will fall into discord among themselves and become easy prey for foreign predators. These were Publius's alternatives, then: national union under a strong central government, or dismemberment under misguided parochial devotion. Sounds more like Hobbes than Hume.

Publius is up front about that, but Wills, with his narrow intellectualist assumptions about the springs of political thought and action, is unable to take him at his own word.

The question then (and still) before the country was simply not a question of Publius's or anyone else's view of human nature or conception of social science. The question was, and is, what kind of political society Americans should forge for themselves. The authors of *The Federalist* knew that, and they knew that their opponents knew it too.

The authors of *The Federalist* argued that the choice was between the Constitution they advocated, which would mold the states into one great union capable of speaking with one voice and acting with one will, and total impotence and chaos. They looked forward to a great American empire based on commerce and manufactures, headed by a national government capable of overwhelming all opposition at home and of pursuing the national interests overseas. Their pages bristle with calls for a navy and a standing army, an expansionist foreign policy, a vigorous

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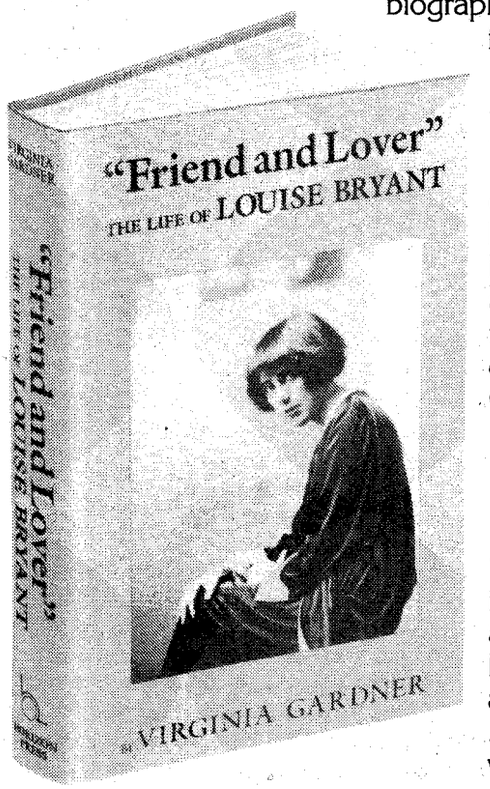

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and efficient administration, and a government fully empowered to raise the revenues needed for those things. All their particular arguments—about faction, about representation, about judicial review and about the "federal supremacy," the "implied powers" and the "necessary and proper" clauses—take their accent and meaning from that one, overriding purpose. Call the result what you will, thundered Patrick Henry before the Virginia ratifying convention, make such nice distinctions as you like, but what it comes down to is "a great consolidation of government." Henry was right.

Given his way of treating *The Federalist* as a pure exercise in political theory, and given his absorption in the terms of debate set by other interpreters of the text, Wills, like those other interpreters but unlike Publius, has very little to say about the Anti-Federalists. Insofar as he does deal with them, he accepts the view of them advanced by their opponents. The authors of *The Federalist* described their opponents as narrow-minded politicians concerned only with defending their local powers and interests, unable to see the utter inadequacy of the Articles of Confederation and willing to seize on any pretext to defeat the Constitution. Wills largely accepts that view, just as he accepts Cecilia Kenyon's influential description of them as "men of little faith," fearful of all power no matter how formed and whether democratic or otherwise. He also accepts the view of the 1780s, propagated by the Federalists and subsequently popularized by the historian John Fiske, as a "critical period" during which America had fallen into a shambles which only strong central government could cure. Accepting that view puts the Anti-Federalists on the wrong side of history, of course, unable to recognize the growing nation-state as the progressive force that would shape a new and nobler future. The Anti-Federalists deserved to lose, for they did not understand the manifest necessities of the future. On all these fundamental points, Wills joins hands with the Publius he admires *and* with the liberals, progressives and political scientists he criticizes.

The portrait of the Anti-Federalists painted by their critics is a caricature. Unfortunately, it's a caricature that, despite the efforts of Merrill Jensen, Jackson Turner Main, Gordon Wood and Herbert J. Storing, still lives on in the popular mind and in the official story of America as one of advancing liberty and democracy, with few losers to speak of, and almost none who didn't deserve defeat. The Anti-Federalists have come down to us as a motley group of small men united only by their mean-spirited and reactionary opposition to the Constitution.

While they did share a distrust, there was more to their affiliation than that. Many of them agreed with the Federalists that there were troubles in the land, and that the states must revise the Articles so as to strengthen their general association. But they felt that the troubles did not amount to a crisis and that the remedy lay less in enforcement by government than in a purification of the values and desires of ordinary citizens. Nor was the Constitution, which gave supremacy in all important matters to the national government, the right answer to the question of how much and what kinds of uniformity were needed among the states.

The Anti-Federalists believed that the solution to the problem of self-government lay not in such devices as representation and separation of powers but in the formation of a public-spirited citizenry. They were convinced that only the small republic could both shape the kind of citizens who would maintain free institutions and keep government responsible to the people. They wanted an economy based on the independent farmer, with a good measure of equality and with no large landless class or class of urban wageworkers. Such an economic condition was a country's best defense against dependence on foreign powers. Furthermore, the agricultural life militated against luxury and envy, and restrained the pursuit of wealth and power. Above all, they thought the preservation of the small republic was best assured by cultivating the virtues of patriotism and public-spiritedness. The republic existed in republican citizens, people joined together in shaping and sharing the common life, and not in mechanical devices and powerful officials. They preferred the known and familiar to the new and strange, the village and town over the great city and the mass of strangers, the direct and personal conduct of affairs by persons known to each other over management by distant officials. Such republics, they thought, would be happy and free, both uninterested in foreign adventures and dangerous to foreign aggressors.

The Anti-Federalists, in short, were speaking for their state republics. And it is important to remember that, even taking slavery into account, the American states formed after 1776 were far and away the freest and most broadly participatory political societies to have appeared within the area shaped by European civilization for hundreds of years.

All this the Federalists called "excess of republican zeal" and devotion to "particular municipal establishments." By the time Publius completes his argument, the term "republic" has come to mean little more than the legal right to vote for a few representatives, and public-spiritedness as the foundation of order and liberty has been replaced by money and commerce as the lifeblood of society and as the principal bonds that people share with one another. Such a people will, of course, neither want nor need much in the way of political interest or participation. Better that they pursue their private affairs while a strong government assures the public peace and pursues the national interest. In sum, the Federalists were resolutely nationalist and progressive. The Anti-Federalists were resolutely localist and conservative.

Wills sides with the winners, and cannot hear the voice of the losers. In his

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eagerness to recover the Founding and *The Federalist* from the liberals, progressives and political scientists, he assumes the same progressive view of history that they did and still largely do. Wills calls himself a conservative. He truly wants to hear a conservative voice in American politics and to find a legacy beyond liberalism that conservatives can honor and call their own. As a student of American politics, Wills has often correctly identified the enemies of the good republic of his dreams. But he has not found his right friends and allies. The Hamilton and Madison he admires are as much enemies of that republic as the Nixon and Kennedys he abhors.

Wills is a strong writer, but a poor listener. Had he listened not just to Publius but also to Publius's opponents, had he understood that the question of whether Publius spoke with a Scottish or an English accent was never the important question, then he might have found an authentically conservative native voice to introduce into our political conversation.

That voice will not come from St. Augustine, whom Wills claims as his teacher in *Confessions of a Conservative* (Doubleday). It was already there in the world Publius intended to abolish, and it has never died, despite the mighty enemies that have time and again tried to kill it. Some significant part of the American soul has always belonged to the Anti-Federalists. Their disinherited successors have appeared in many forms—the citizens who made the Dorr Rebellion, the Indians who have pleaded for their place and their people, Jane Addams and the Settlement House movement, the Farmers Alliance and the early People's Party, the trade union movement, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Workers, the early Students for a Democratic Society, and Henry Adams, and Mary Parker Follett, and Hawthorne and Faulkner and Edmund Wilson and Jane Jacobs and Kirkpatrick Sale and Wendell Berry—all those who have resisted having their pasts erased and their futures canceled by the waves of forced social change we miscall progress; all those who have cherished the values of conservation, variety and self-government over the values of exploitation, centralism and hierarchy.

Their voices are a rebuke to the defenders of corporate power and the masters of the national security state who go by the name "conservative" among us. When we learn to make the losers and the disinherited co-founders with the winners, then we shall have introduced a true conservative voice into our political conversation.

Or try this another way around, a way that might suggest that what I am calling conservative is the right cause for those who would today be radical. Wills argues that while *The Federalist* "explains" Publius's America it does not explain our America, for we long ago lost or surrendered that treasure of "public virtue," of the "classical virtues reborn," which was so dear to the heart and central to the argument of Publius, replacing it instead with a conception of politics as the organized pursuit of selfish interest. But Publius wanted a great nation and state, and never thought for a minute that such a mighty edifice could be built out of the flimsy material called public virtue. What was needed was strong government. In order to build that state, Publius knew it was necessary to teach people to define "republic" as nothing more than a system in which people are permitted to vote.

That surely is our America, and Publius surely does "explain" it. What Publius does not explain is why so many of us feel lost and threatened in that America, and why so many, here and elsewhere, fear that that America may yet destroy itself and much else besides. For that explanation, we might better go to the Anti-Federalists and their fugitive successors—those whom Publius almost but not quite managed to dispossess and abolish. □

Unreal Realism

WALTER KENDRICK

WALL-TO-WALL AMERICA: A Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression. *By Karal Ann Marling. University of Minnesota Press. 348 pp. $35. Paper $14.95.*

The analysis of second-rate art can be more demanding than that of masterpieces. Great art can be studied on its own terms and on those of an independent artistic tradition, but run-of-the-mill art has too few terms of its own to bother with, and its place in the tradition is banal. To analyze the commonplace, one must explore literally everything in its environment—all the economic, political, social and cultural factors of which it is a symptom and a reflection. "Art history" goes by the boards in the process, but something far more enlightening can emerge.

Karal Ann Marling admits that her subject—the more than 1,200 murals executed for the Treasury Section of Painting and Sculpture between 1934 and 1943—is uninteresting from an art-historical point of view. She sees *Wall-to-Wall America* not as an art book but as a contribution to "the holistic enterprise called American Studies." Her narrow subject becomes the vehicle for a broad question: "What did America look like to American eyes during the Great Depression?"

The goal seems out of all proportion to the means, yet Marling's success is extraordinary. Not only does *Wall-to-Wall America* answer her primary question better than any other book I've ever read, but it also yields dividends on such knotty problems as American attitudes toward "art" and "artists," the fortunes of modernism and the self-contradictory operations of the New Deal. She labored for years over the least compelling documents I can imagine—inventories, letters and memorandums exhumed from the catacombs of the National Archives—but her style is always refreshingly light and casual.

Incoherence is the hallmark of Marling's story, but she herself is never incoherent. The Treasury Section—which changed names twice in its hectic ten-year history—started out with a roster of mutually exclusive aims and proceeded to lurch toward one or another of them as the mood took it. On the one hand, it wanted to gratify local residents, who would have to look at the murals every day. This meant giving them clear, representational images of an idyllic past, present or future. On the other hand, it hoped to educate these people, which meant encouraging "art" the locals might not like at first, but that would do them good in the long run. On the third hand, it was intended to give worthwhile employment to starving artists—which should have meant letting them do their work as they saw fit. No hand knew what the others were doing; add an ordinary dose of bureaucratic in-

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competence and simple human misunderstanding, and you arrive at a mess fit to drive a historian mad.

Marling possesses the rare gift of portraying murk clearly; she threads her way surely through all these labyrinths, drawing general conclusions but never losing her grip on vivid, particular details. After a brief discussion of how the Section came into being, she takes up the paradigmatic case of Stefan Hirsch's commission to paint a mural in the newly erected, anomalously splendid courthouse of Aiken, South Carolina. The fee was to be $2,200—quite a plum at a time when Sears & Roebuck's best suits sold for $15.45. Hirsch worked hard for his money: he designed a three-part painting that showed Justice in the middle, flanked by vignettes of her as Protector (a jolly rural scene) and Avenger (a convicted arsonist being conducted into his cell). Dusky-faced Justice, in red blouse and blue skirt, looked mulatto; and most observers thought the arsonist was being set free, thanks to the efforts of what looked like a "shyster lawyer" standing nearby. The Aikenites were multiply insulted; they hadn't even been asked if they wanted a mural in the first place. Finally, after much argument, a compromise was reached that satisfied no one: the offending mural was left in place but covered by a tan velvet curtain that was "opened to the public on request."

Everybody lost out in Aiken, but the operative triangle comes clear: "the painter, the commissioning agency, and the people." The confused interaction of these three parties—not one of which understood the others or even itself—provides the framework for a sweeping geographical and topical survey. Marling pays special attention to the "48 States Competition" of 1939, the Section's most ambitious undertaking and its richest producer of blunders. In one small, standard-issue post office in every state, a standard-size mural was to be installed above the postmaster's door. Entries poured in: 972 artists submitted 1,477 designs.

Unfortunately, few of the artists had ever seen the towns they were designing murals for, and neither had the Section authorities—which led to some revealing (and often very funny) entanglements. Both Philip Von Saltza and Lew Davis submitted designs for Safford, Arizona; but because too many good ones came in for Safford and too few for less evocative places, some minor changes had to be made. Von Saltza's "Wild Horses by Moonlight" went to Schuyler, Nebraska—where, as the townsfolk observed, there are few cactuses. So the background was quickly repainted to show poplars. Davis's "Indian Pony Round" went to Los Banos, California, and the Indians—never plentiful in Los Banos—got handily redone as "Early Spanish Caballeros." Regionalism was the ostensible keynote of the competition, but in practice, as Marling says, regionalism was "a gimmick." It was "a matter of props, juggled with the perfunctory aplomb of a Hollywood set decorator."

Like the Aikenites, the residents of the chosen forty-eight towns were never consulted on their preferences. But the competition got such publicity—including a multipage picture spread in *Life*—that they soon made their feelings known. These were vague on the positive side but clear on the negative: they wanted no nudity, none of "that abstract art stuff" and, most of all, nothing resembling the misery that surrounded them at every moment. If any single theme connects the complex, disparate stories Marling tells, it's the apparently unanimous desire of Depression America not to see the Depression, "the missing center of New Deal cultural history."

What the locals wanted—and what, after considerable bungling, they usually got—was unreal realism, soothingly phony portrayals of a dreamed-up America. Marion Gilmore's "Band Concert" is a case in point. Chosen for Corning, Iowa, it had in fact been modeled on a different town altogether, because, as Gilmore said, "I have been in Corning and their band stand and topography [are] not suitable for my design or typical of most small towns." The mural didn't much resemble any other real town either, but, despite the Section's pious horror, the folks in Corning loved it. What they saw on

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their post-office wall wasn't real, it was better—a dream that looked real, into which a limited, clichéd and rather desperate imagination could flee for solace.

It's impossible in this limited space to do justice to the vast range Marling covers, the scores of amusing anecdotes she tells or the variety of provocative questions she poses. *Wall-to-Wall America* is a groundbreaking book. Its closest recent parallel is Jackson Lears's *No Place of Grace*, which explores American "antimodernism" at the turn of the twentieth century with the same tolerance for obscure detail and respect for common understanding. Marling is less tendentious than Lears, less eager to find a correspondence between the past and the present, but on the whole their aims are similar, and they augur a bright future for the hodgepodge discipline of American studies.

That's the great problem, after all, the great American problem—to discover what this anomalous country is and where it's going. Traditional approaches and disciplines, inherited from Europe, have never been adequate, though most scholars have stuck to them for want of the ability to invent better alternatives. *Wall-to-Wall America* suggests that alternatives are now being found, and that a new generation of scholars has the patience, humor and love to pursue them. □

Corporate Myths

MARY ELLEN BURNS

FEAR AT WORK: Job Blackmail, Labor and the Environment. *By Richard Kazis and Richard L. Grossman. The Pilgrim Press. 306 pp. $10.95.*

According to Richard Kazis and Richard L. Grossman, when corporations say that they cannot comply with environmental regulations without declaring bankruptcy, closing the shop, laying off hundreds of workers or moving out of town, they are generally not telling the truth. Marshaling facts, statistics, anecdotes and arguments, Kazis and Grossman show that the perennial industry claim that environmental laws throw people out of work is false, as is another old corporate saw, the notion that environmental regulation is killing the economy.

It is refreshing to read a book that focuses so intently on corporate myth-making and its role in the continuing assault on environmental and worker-safety gains. Corporations' access to information, technology and resources often permits them to frame the terms of the public debate—as anyone who has read the expensively purchased Mobil Oil Corporation missives on the Op-Ed page of *The New York Times* can attest. However, an informed public, and especially an informed labor and environmental movement, can and have cut through such propaganda with facts.

As the authors point out, left alone, business has never provided either plentiful jobs or a clean environment, and has always fought against environmental, health and safety laws. In the mid-nineteenth century, for instance, attempts to impose safety standards on steamboats and railroads met with vociferous industry opposition in the name of free enterprise and private property, even though the regulations were designed to prevent people from being killed by faulty equipment. As recently as the 1930s, opponents of water pollution regulations argued that "streams are nature's sewers." While many of today's environmental dangers are relatively new (ubiquitous toxic synthetic hydrocarbons, for example), the attitude of industry has, apparently, not changed all that much in a hundred years.

Fear at Work would be a useful resource even if all it did was to gather facts and statistics, but the authors have more in mind than that. The book, which grew out of the work of a group called Environmentalists for Full Employment, argues that the labor movement and the environmental movement are natural allies against the enormous social and economic power of the modern corporation. As the authors see it, environmental and worker health and safety regulations are fundamentally radical issues, for by forcing industry to accept limitations on its power to act, regulations increase "worker and public involvement in the production

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and investment decisions of private corporations" and thereby "alter the balance of power between employers and the public."

While there is certainly some truth in this contention, *Fear at Work* overstates it. The passage of a regulation designed to protect the public hardly heralds the onset of social revolution. New rules can easily become just another level of red tape and bureaucratic routine. This quibble aside, *Fear at Work* makes a strong case for the idea that when people confront corporations in order to expand environmental and worker health protections, they are also expanding their democratic rights.

In an effort to address every conceivable issue, the argument sometimes sacrifices depth for breadth. From a brief history of the American labor movement to a précis on the growth of environmentalism, the authors want to tell us everything, and we are often left with more interesting facts than we know what to do with. All the same, *Fear at Work* is a measure of how sophisticated the environmental movement has become since the first Earth Day, in 1970, was scorned by many radicals as a diversion from antiwar activism. By bringing environmental and worker protection into the arena of political analysis, *Fear at Work* should enable both environmental and labor groups to see their battles in a larger and clearer perspective. □

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Tootsie
Gandhi

Dustin Hoffman's hilarious performance in *Tootsie* is being somewhat hilariously overanalyzed in the press. The movie is a knockabout farce, based on the not unfamiliar theme of the desperate chap who tries to escape his particular predicament by donning wig, skirts and a conspicuous pair of falsies. It may be more profound than *Charley's Aunt* or *Some Like It Hot*, but it hardly demands elucidation.

The reason for the probing is that, in the manner of Woody Allen, Hoffman is here spinning a yarn which, if it does not parallel, at least impinges upon aspects of his own life. Michael Dorsey (Hoffman) is an actor who, though well regarded in the profession, cannot get a job in anything from soaps to Shakespeare. The trouble is that Dorsey is a perfectionist—and an outspoken one. He can be counted on to destroy any production schedule by repeated arguments on fine points of psychological probability or narrative logic. Hoffman has that sort of reputation, and in his early days, before *The Graduate* won him a following that has since become an army, it cost him many jobs. Early in *Tootsie*, Dorsey's agent tells him that he is unemployable on any stage in the country and that he'd better get a job as a waiter. The agent is played by Sydney Pollack, who also directed the film, and the scene fairly jumps from the screen because you sense that the two men are shouting at each other through their characters. A few minutes later, shadow-boxing his way downtown, Dorsey suddenly yells, "I'm a great character actor; I can play anybody!" In *Tootsie*, Hoffman proves that he just about can.

Because what makes the movie such fun is that his Dorothy Michaels is not just Michael Dorsey in drag. She soon becomes an authentic, if bizarre, character in her own right, one who for long stretches dominates the action and turns the story on its ear. Having landed a job on a daytime TV serial, she rewrites the script as the cameras roll. This confuses the other actors and enrages the male-chauvinist director (Dabney Coleman), but the delighted viewers flood the studio with fan mail for Dorothy. And, unused to the indignities suffered by her sex, she instructs the men with whom she deals in the virtues of equal rights and mutual courtesy. No one on the screen doubts that the crusading Ms. Michaels is quite a dame, and the audience in the movie theater comes to much the same opinion.

Of course, the picture resounds with the clatter of slapstick. I won't spoil it by going into detail, but to give an idea of the suffering imposed on Dorsey by his unflappable doppelgänger, there comes a moment in the action when a new friend (Jessica Lange) becomes convinced that Dorothy is a lesbian, while his longtime friend (Teri Garr) is persuaded that Michael is gay. Problems of identity, as well as principles of equality, predictably arise in the movie, and these may well relate to Hoffman's

THE AGE WHEN PARENTS DON'T NEED REASONS

"It's not the cherries but the time that's ripe."
The tree had made a promise father wouldn't let
the birds break. We hung a dozen pie tins
but the cherries mimicked raindrops on the awnings
and never scared the birds. Neither did father,

clapping beneath the roost at dawn, after work—
the winter ground where he had scattered feed.
Before they pitted half of every fruit
he coached me up and I dropped them, small and pale,
on sheets tucked at the trunk as if to break a fall.

Mother would stand till dinner crimping shells,
pitting, conceding cups of sugar by the tablespoon.
Proud as though the tree were another child
and the pie, something made at school, she served
dessert and father sliced us each a wedge,

an even share of land. Too sweet, too much,
and hard as softened stones—but when we asked
to be excused not a crumb was left to say
we had no manners. Readied for bed at nine,
we let him tuck us goodnight beneath the sheets

like nothing ever happened. He called back
from the stairwell, promising more next week,
red, riper ones. But in our different rooms,
my brother, sister and I were quiet
as though his voice could never reach that high.

Michael J. Rosen

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own convictions. But they could sink a farce if they got the upper hand. What makes *Tootsie* take off and fly is his almost absurd dexterity as a character actor.

The story is by Don McGuire and Larry Gelbart, the screenplay by Gelbart and Murray Schisgal. I suspect that Hoffman was not bashful with advice.

Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* is every bit as sumptuous as everyone had expected. Years in the making, it is performed on a stage that spreads across two continents and deploys a cast that may well number in the thousands. Like *Lawrence of Arabia*, with which it is being compared, it celebrates a hero who combined intense spiritual ardor with a flawless command of showmanship, and it sweeps with steadily rising momentum through scenes that vary in scope from panoramic uprisings of mass passion to intimate clashes of will and poignant domestic interludes.

Ben Kingsley, a Eurasian actor of evident intelligence and impressive power, reaffirms the Mahatma's legendary courage, moral purity and steadfast vision, and adorns these virtues with an ironic quickness of wit and a simple gaiety that add a beguiling humanity to Gandhi's popular image. He is well supported by Indian and English actors and actresses who will be largely unknown to the American public, and in particular by the trio of John Gielgud, Trevor Howard and John Mills, once again playing stalwart servants of the expiring British Empire. The cast also includes Candice Bergen, Edward Fox and Martin Sheen.

High school students are being taken to the movie in squadrons, and they appear to watch it with rapt attention. Since for many of them it will be their introduction to one of the half-dozen most influential men of our century, I suspect that henceforth they will think of Gandhi as the tragic hero of a thrilling historical drama. For Attenborough's picture is another cinematic hagiography, an approach that has been applied successfully to such various figures as Emile Zola and Sigmund Freud, George Patton and Clarence Darrow. Paradoxically, *Gandhi*'s subject was too grand for such grandiose celebration. On its own terms, the movie is an unqualified triumph, but it is much broader than it is deep. The demands of popular spectacle make it an exercise in awe, turning Gandhi into a star attraction. □

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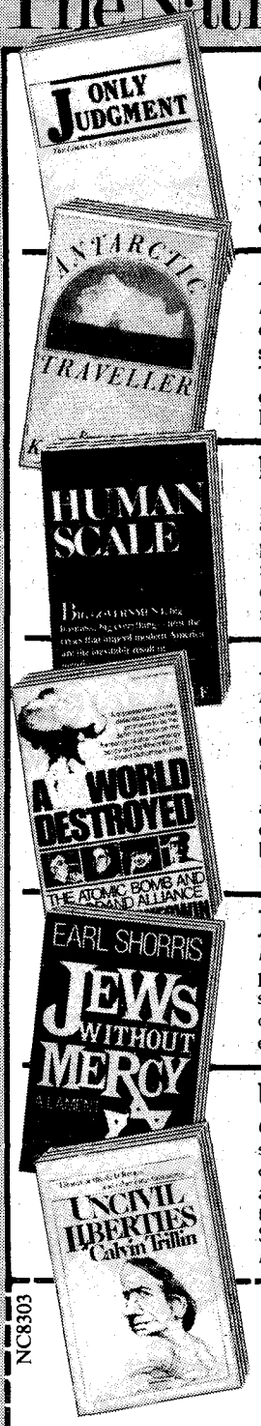

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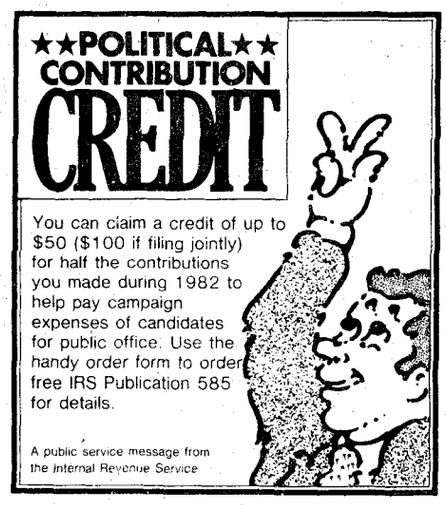
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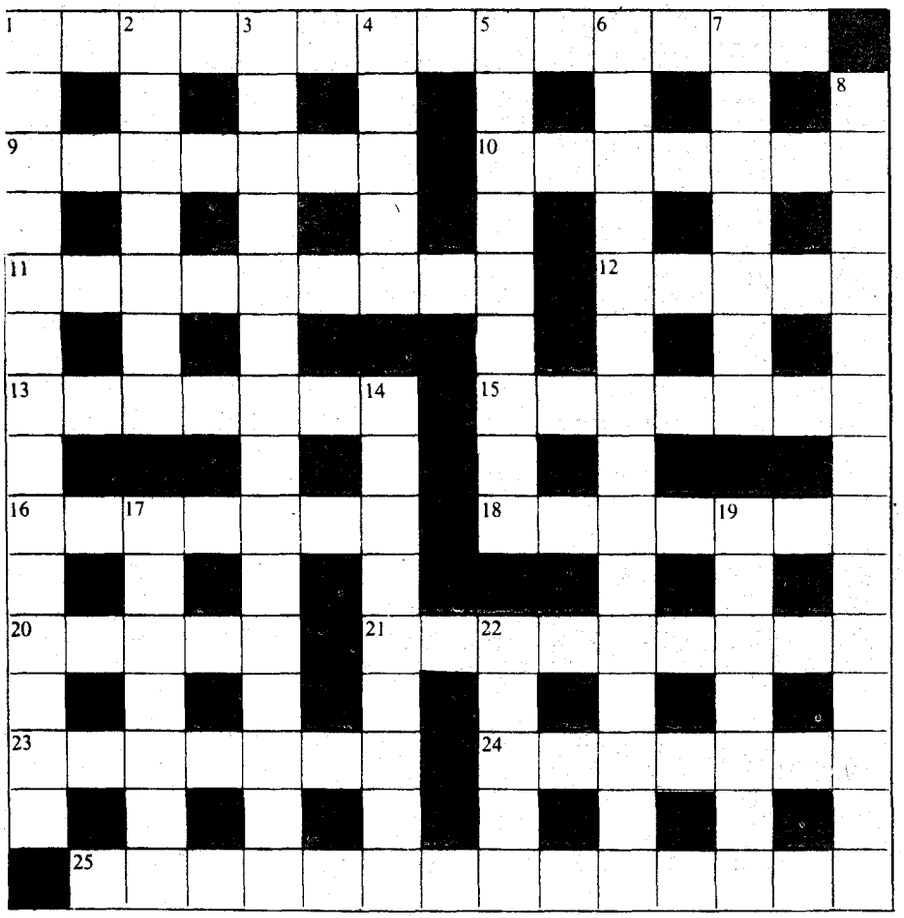

ACROSS

1 Typified by "vacuum cleaner" and "garbage can"—or a herd of things. (10,4)
9 A current evaluator, with one millimeter tree damage. (7)
10 A smaller version of what Debussy made light of. (7)
11 Marble-like defensive plating in average environment. (9)
12 A good stock of perfume here? (It might remind one of the flag.) (5)
13 Frequents places like Coney Island? (7)
15 Pain-killer, possibly not the most common variety. (Almost all of what struck back on the screen gets in.) (7)
16 Like a set of bells on a fancy version, if idle. (7)
18 The title is returned to the emperor, perhaps, which calls for something to eat. (7)
20 He probably prefers short sentences. (5)
21 Say again? (9)
23 Catch something coming back where the sheep may be, and each will be a number of times greater. (7)
24 Involves a silent version. (7)
25 What gave Castile its name, being something to dream about. (7,2,5)

DOWN

1 For a spell, a pair allows things to dangle from the wrist. (5,9)
2 There's a point in nocturnal animals being ghosts of the dead in Roman religion. (7)
3 A gloating expression to etch around your ticker, as they say. (3,4,5,3)
4 In short, an outgrowth of trees. (5)
5 One doesn't have to be drafted, coming from Tennessee! (9)
6 Classic suggestion of missing marbles—not the Elgin type. (3,6,6)
7 Counterfeiter who evidently talked! (7)
8 A more acceptable version of a man-to-man talk when you make such a call? (6-2-6)
14 The rocker in Davy Jones's locker is made out of chiton. (3,6)
17 Rey's daughter. . . (7)
19 . . .and Ivan's wife. (7)
22 Boadicea's folk. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1945

P	I	D	G	I	N	E	N	G	L	I	S	H		
R		I		N		L		A		N		E		H
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T	O	T	E	S		A	N	T	A	L	K	A	L	I
M		I				N		E				N		P
E	N	C	O	U	N	T	E	R		S	T	O	M	A
E				P		I				P		M		N
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G		E		E		T		F		C		S		M
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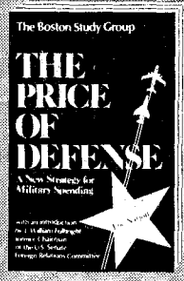

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